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WINNING HIM BACK

By Anita Vivanti Chartres

MÉNAGE

“**N**OTHING ever happens,” said Grace. “Things happen in newspapers and in Paris and in Conan Doyle, but not to one’s self; not when one has a decent income.” And she looked reproachfully at her husband, who was sipping his black coffee with a stolid and comfortable countenance.

“That is because you are married,” chirped Fifine, rolling her French r’s in her throat in a soft, pigeon-like way, as she dangled a cherry by its stalk, just above her pretty lips, and made little snaps at it. “What can happen to one after that?—except in the modern play and French novels. Why did you do it?”

“Ah, why did I?” sighed Grace, still looking at her husband, with her head on one side and an expression of wonder and self-commiseration in her eyes; “why did I?”

“Because you were in love with me,” said Mr. Carrington, placidly.

“I believe I was,” said Grace, with an air of great surprise.

“So you are now,” said her husband, cracking a walnut; “heels over head in love with me.”

In the silence of utter amazement which followed, Fifine’s laughter trilled out, youngly, and the Brat, too, laughed. The Brat—Grace’s sister—who was eight years old and wore her hair in two little, tight pigtails, which were stiff and funny to look at, laughed, shrilly and long, out of pure lightness of heart.

Grace was very angry. She turned to the Brat, and said:

“Leave the room, miss.”

“But I haven’t done anything,” said the Brat, with that quick transition from wild laughter to whimpers so well known to the child soul.

“I told you to leave the room,” said Grace, irrelevantly.

The Brat got up, pushing her chair back with a great deal of noise, and turning her pigtails sulkily to the table.

“I think it is a shame,” she said, when she got to the door. “And all,” she added, with a loud sob, “because I have no mother.” With this deadly parting shaft, she left the room, slamming the door behind her.

A short silence followed. Then Mr. Carrington laughed, loudly and heartily, and Fifine giggled; but Grace was very stern.

“I do not see anything to laugh at. You made me treat the child cruelly. Now, if I go after her with some cake, she will be unmanageable for a week; and, if I leave her to cry her heart out, I shall feel like a murderer.”

“Let us compromise,” said Mr. Carrington. “I will take her the cake.” He rose, and, taking many sweets with him, left the room.

“I hate him,” said Grace to Fifine.

“Yes,” said Fifine, with quiet, downcast lids; “of course.”

“Why, ‘of course?’” snapped Grace. “I don’t see any ‘of course,’ except that he is my husband and that it is bad form to care about one’s husband.”

“Yes,” said Fifine.

“And,” continued Grace, aggressively, “for that matter, he is much nicer than the average husband—much nicer than any husband *you* are ever likely to get.”

"Yes," said Fifine.

"He has curly hair, and he is twenty-seven, and his eyes are beautiful."

"They are," said Fifine.

Grace shot a quick glance across at her friend. Then she smiled, and Fifine smiled. And they both got up and sat on a low, soft couch in a corner, with their arms around each other's waists.

"You darling!" said Grace.

"You sweet," said Fifine, kissing her.

"I am very unhappy," said Grace.

"I know you are, poor love," said Fifine.

"You see how he treats me," continued Grace; "how infamously he treats me! how he says just the things that make me miserable! Fancy his knowing that I am in love with him! Fancy his being so sure of it that he throws it into my very face!"

"It is serious," said the little French girl. "What has made him so sure of you? Have you told him that you love him—actually told him?"

"Occasionally," admitted Grace.

"Occasionally!" sneered her friend. "Do you mean often? Yes, you do mean often. *Grand Dieu!*"—and she took Grace by the shoulders and peered into her face—"I believe you are always telling him so; always telling him that you love him, and not leaving him anything to guess at or to tremble about. Ah, fatal! fatal!"

And Fifine's little hands slipped, helpless and bejeweled, into her lap.

Grace looked guilty and miserable. "I have tried to be a good wife—" she began, meekly.

But Fifine interrupted her, starting up from her seat and walking about, with rustling skirts and foreign gestures.

"Good! 'good!' You always were 'good.' In school, Gracie, we used to call you 'Gracious Goodness,' for short; well, not for short. But anyhow," she added, vaguely, "if you haven't learned enough to know that men don't want 'good' wives, you ought to go back to school again."

"How do you know so much about what men want? You're not married," said Grace, crossly.

"That's why I know all about it," quoth Fifine, and Grace did not dare to argue.

"What shall I do?" she said, weakly.

"My dear, you must win him back!"

"Win him back!" gasped Grace. "Why, that is dreadful."

"Not at all, not at all. It is exciting; it is great fun," said Fifine, nodding.

"But I mean," said Grace, "it is dreadful that one should have to do it."

"One always has to win a man back after one has married him," said Fifine. "Men are built that way."

Grace sat pensive, raising troubled eyebrows. "Win—him—back! It is not," she mused, "that I dislike the idea; it sounds interesting. But how does one do it?"

"Gracie," said Fifine, with glowing eyes and hand uplifted, "you must do it by keeping up the *Houp-là*."

"The what?" exclaimed Grace.

"The *Houp-là*," whispered Fifine, mysteriously.

"Hush!" she added, as Mr. Carrington's voice was heard outside. "I will tell you later on."

Grace sat still, looking bewildered and sweet, as her husband came in, holding the Brat by the hand. The Brat immediately pretended to cry, and tried to look small and shrunken and pathetic.

"Here is a good little girl," began Mr. Carrington, at which touching description of herself the Brat set up a loud and sudden wail; "a good little girl, who is coming to be forgiven. Ask pardon, youngster," he said to the forlorn little figure by his side, and took his hand away from her.

The Brat went up to Grace, slowly, with her toes turned in, sobbing a little and rubbing her eyes with a fist that held some candy.

"Please forgive me," she mumbled.

Grace took hold of the warm little wrist.

"Will you never do it again?" she asked, earnestly.

"Do what again?" said the Brat.

There was silence. Grace had for-

gotten what the Brat had done. Mr. Carrington coughed and looked out of the window, and Fifine turned her face away.

"Do what again?" repeated the Brat, scenting her advantage and making the most of it.

"I don't know," said Grace, guiltily. "But, whatever it was, don't do it again."

At which the Brat giggled, because she had a sense of humor. And Grace laughed as she kissed the little, sticky face.

II

THE HOUP-LÀ

At noon the following day, Fifine, pink and buoyant, looking like a rose slightly powdered with veloutine, entered Grace's boudoir, with rustling skirts and trailing perfumes.

"*Bonjour, ma mae!*"

"Well," said Grace, dejectedly, "I have been trying to keep up the *Houp-là*, but as I don't know what it is, I do not suppose I have done it."

Fifine laughed. She kissed Grace lightly on the top of the head, and sat down in an arm-chair, unpinning her little fly-away bonnet and opening the ruffles around her throat.

"My dear Gracie," she said, "did it ever occur to you that no one at school ever spoke about my mother?"

"*Bong Dew!*" exclaimed Grace, moved to French by this exordium.

Fifine continued:

"No; everybody spoke about the Count de La Corderie, my father, but we always skipped or skimmed over the countess, my mother. That is because she was a circus girl, a dear little circus girl, with fluffy skirts, who perched on the backs of fat, white horses, and leaped through paper rings, and jabbed the clown's face with her jeweled riding-whip. She was very pretty and very clever and very funny; and, although she was the kind of mother people would call 'undesirable,' I wish, oh, I wish"—and there was a break in the little

pigeon-like voice—"that she were not dead!"

"*Bong Dew,*" said Grace once more, deeply moved.

"Grace, if you say that again, I shall hit you," said Fifine. "It is dreadful; it is not French."

"Very well," said Grace. "Go on, dear."

"The count, my father, fell in love with her because of the funny little way in which she used to cry, '*Houp-là!*' just before turning a somersault on the galloping horse, or while she leaped through the paper rings. She had a treble voice like a child's, and my father used to say that it went right through him and made his heart leap into his throat, every time he heard the little, shrill cry. After she was married, she never allowed him to fall out of love with her. And she told me she did it—by 'keeping up the *Houp-là*.'"

"But what did she mean?" began Grace.

"My dear, she meant a number of things, of vague and subtle things, difficult to name. '*The Houp-là*,' she used to say to me, 'is to married life what the sparkle is to champagne; nothing definite—empty air, indeed—but how essential! Always, Fifine, my child, when you have a husband, remember to keep up the *Houp-là*.'"

"I suppose it is all very lucid to you," sighed Grace; "but I do not see anything that applies to me, or to Tom. And Tom was perfectly heartless this morning as he went out," she continued. "When I looked out of the window after him, he only just turned around once to wave his hand—and *not* when he got to the corner!"

"Now, then," said Fifine, folding her hands in a businesslike way, "tomorrow do not go to the window at all. If he mentions the fact, say, laughing sweetly: 'Dear! dear! did I forget? How careless of me!' And be light and sunny and nonchalant. And henceforward, *ma chérie*, keep a little shadow of mystery drawn over your soul, and let your eyes be dreamy under drooping lids. Trail about the

rooms in clinging gowns and undefined perfumes. Adopt fads; insist upon having your rooms filled with gardenias, when they are out of season; faint away at the sight of a certain shade of mauve. Then spring surprises upon him. Be sudden; be extraordinary; be unexpected. Do things! Pack up a powder-puff and a silk petticoat, and let him find you with a cab at the door, going away forever! Take poison one day. Be shot at by a frenzied lover the next. Adore him with the passion of a Spanish tigress to-day; ignore his existence to-morrow. All this, with a few other things, my dear Gracie, is what I call keeping up the *Houp-là*."

"It sounds dreadfully wearing," sighed Grace.

"Oh, well, of course, if you are satisfied to be like every other wretched wife, do it in your own way," said Fifine, rising.

"No, no! Don't go away," cried Grace. Then, clasping her hands, she said: "But are you sure?—sure that this is the right way to—to win him back? It sounds so agitating! I thought that by being gentle and sweet-tempered and loving, that by being always the same to him——"

"You miserable!" cried Fifine, wildly, "don't you know that a man never wants sameness? Why, you must be different every time he sees you!"

"Are you sure?" repeated Grace.

"Sure? Of course, I am sure. Have I not tried it on Reginald? Have I not tried everything on Reginald?"

"Who is Reginald?" asked Grace, bewildered, sitting down again.

"My dear, I have not told you," said Fifine, dabbing her face carefully with a little powder-puff taken from her pocket, "because things are still a little—uncertain. He is an Englishman, you know; and Englishmen never know their own minds."

"Don't they?" said Grace.

"No, they don't," snapped Fifine. "And, if you are going to contradict me, I might as well go home."

"Oh, Fifine, I did not contradict you. Kiss me! And I love you!"

Kiss! "And you are sweet!" Kiss, kiss, kiss! "And you are so exciting and interesting!"

Fifine was mollified. "Well, I was telling you about Reginald. My dear, he is an angel! A tall, gentlemanly angel, with a tawny mustache and a drawl like a hero in one of 'The Duchess's' novels. He pronounces his r's like w's and is always 'dweadfully bored,' because he is so superior, you know, and he writes things, essays and things, on something!" she ended, hazily.

"How nice!" said Grace, propitiatingly.

"Well, my dear, you should see me keeping up the *Houp-là* with Reginald! And that is nothing to what I shall do when I have married him. I shall not be one of those benighted Anglo-Saxon wives, who still believe in being good to their husbands, and I shall manage him in French, not in English. I shall be strange, I shall be unwholesome, I shall be unexpected, I shall be impossible. And he will adore me."

"Oh, Fifine, to think that you are engaged, and that you have never told me!" exclaimed Grace.

"Well, I am not exactly engaged. I—he is one of those slow, stolid Englishmen, who take a year or two to make up their minds about a thing——"

"Perhaps, darling," Grace ventured, tentatively, "with a man like that, a little less *Houp-là*——"

Fifine cast a glance of withering scorn at her friend. "We will not speak about him any more," she said.

And no amount of coaxing, or luncheon, or delicate flattery, would move her.

"I will help you with your affairs, Grace, if you wish me to, but I will manage mine in my own way."

So they returned to Mr. Carrington and his misdeeds. Fifine decided that the first thing to do was to look through all his pockets. This they did, methodically and thoroughly, Grace getting "a turn" every time her hand found a folded paper.

"I feel very mean," she said, as she put back into a coat-pocket a bill for a diamond heart and chain that he had given her on her last birthday. "These clothes look so—so helpless, you know, poor things"; and, when Fifine was not looking, she kissed an old brown coat as she hung it up. Fifine was sniffing at a silk handkerchief, and held it out to Grace.

"Is this your perfume?"

"Yes," said Grace.

"Oh, all right," said Fifine, rather aggrieved.

They were sitting on the hearth-rug, turning Tom's evening-suit pockets inside out, when the door opened, stealthily, and the Brat put her head in.

"Aha!" she cried, derisively, "prying, are you? I'll tell Tom that you are going through his pockets. Prying!"

"Brat, darling, come here," said Grace, with a bland smile. "I have something to show you."

The Brat stuck out a pink and rigid tongue.

"Well, then, you shall not see it," and Grace hid one closed hand behind her back.

"What is it, anyhow?" asked the Brat, and came forward.

"Bend down and you shall see," said Grace, and the Brat bent down.

Grace grasped one of the pigtails and pulled it hard. The Brat shrieked, loudly.

"Promise you won't tell? Swear that you won't? Never? Honor bright?"

"Honor bright!" squealed the child, and Grace released her. Making a horrible face at them both, the Brat left the room.

"She will tell," whispered Grace. But Fifine, with many winks and nods, pointing to the open door, spoke in a loud voice as follows:

"Have you noticed, Grace, how pretty that child is growing? She really has such beautiful, beautiful eyes!" Then she was convulsed with silent laughter.

"Yes," Grace answered, as soon as she could control her voice, "and she is such a dear, noble child, too." Wild and soundless mirth on the part of Fifine. "You know," continued Grace, at the top of her voice, "she has such a sense of honor! She will never tell; she has promised us that she won't, and she always, always keeps her word."

"I don't think!" remarked the Brat, leering evilly around the open door. "And, if you have any more soft soap for me, why don't you call me in and give it to me, instead of shouting it at me through the door?"

The Brat had to be propitiated with candy and a promise to be shown anything interesting that might be found in Tom's pockets.

Something was found, but it was not shown to the Brat. It was a thing which Fifine, with her very throaty French r's, called a "prroof," and Grace's gentle head was bent over it with many tears. A bill of fare, a French bill of fare, full of naughty things to eat and drink—for two!

"But might he not have been with another man?" Grace had ventured, hesitantly.

"Nonsense, Gracie!" said Fifine. "Don't you know there is the greatest difference in the world between a man's bill of fare and a woman's? Look at this," and she ran over the incriminating list. "Would two men have ordered such a collection of dreadful things—Martini cocktails, caviare, *huitres*, *bisque d'écrevisses*, *foie gras au truffes*, *homard au diable*—my dear, my dear, this is a most immoral bill of fare. There was a woman here, I tell you—a woman! And," she added, mysteriously, "probably a blonde."

There was a fresh burst of indignation from Grace.

"Come, come! We must face it," said Fifine, with a comfortable sense of heroism. "Now, when was it? There is no date here—when was he in Paris?"

"We were there twice," sobbed

Grace. "Once on our h-h-honeymoon and once—Fifine!" she cried, suddenly, "you don't think that, while we were actually on our h-honeymoon, he was taking creatures—blonde creatures—to dinner?"

"No," said Fifine, looking wise; "I don't think so. It must have been the other time."

"That was last Summer. Oh, Tom! Tom! Tom!"

"Gracie, my poor darling," cooed Fifine, "I am desolated for you. Now, forget everything except that you have to win him back."

Grace would have preferred leaving him forever, but Fifine, who knew life and understood men, pointed out that he then would surely go back to the woman of the bill of fare.

So Grace decided that she would stay with him and win him back.

III

WINNING HIM BACK

LITTLE did Mr. Carrington know what was going on in his household, in the days that followed.

Grace had resolved that she would be a stranger to him, and adopted that attitude immediately on the day of the discovery of the bill of fare. But he came home in a very good humor, and did all the talking himself, and never even noticed that she was being a stranger to him.

This was aggravated by the fact that he told two funny stories at table, and she laughed at them, because she could not help it.

She left off being a stranger to him, and determined to be dreamy, morbid and unwholesome. So she filled the house with undefined perfume and tried to faint at certain shades of mauve.

When Tom came into the atmosphere redolent of pastilles, *foin coupé*, *bergamot* and *ylang ylang*, he said, lighting his cigar, hurriedly, "Phew! You have had those wretched old maids, the Harrisons, up here again

for tea. I smell them." And, before Grace could answer, "It is a sure sign of middle-aged hysteria, this soaking one's self in odors. Open up, Gracie, and let us have some fresh air."

With Fifine, Grace practised fainting until she ached all over; and they determined that she should be found already "fainted," when Tom came in.

The certain shades of mauve were some dress samples of *crêpe de chine*, which she had her tailor send to her on approval. They were lying loose on the table, and she arranged herself limply on the floor when she heard Tom's key in the door down-stairs.

But the Brat, who had been peeping, came in and tickled her until she shrieked; so she had to get up and race around the table in order to catch and slap the Brat.

"I don't know what to do," she said, dejectedly, to Fifine, who called next day to hear results. "I don't seem to have done anything. He certainly has not noticed anything, and I don't seem to have won him back a bit."

"Will you try to poison yourself?" asked Fifine, cheerily. "You don't really take anything, of course. You lie in a darkened room and are very pale, with an empty bottle of arsenic tossed on the floor beside you."

"I cannot be pale when I want to," said Grace, pettishly.

"Oh, silly!" said Fifine. "Lanoline, and powder over it—that sticks and is beautiful."

Grace was unconvinced. "And then, oughtn't I to show signs of sickness?" she said.

So they set aside the poisoning.

"I have done all these things successfully with Reginald," remarked Fifine, "because, you see, he does not live in the house. He just comes in and sees me; he is terribly moved and shaken; and then I wave my hand weakly, and say, 'Go! go! go!' as I fall back, unconscious. And he goes."

"I dare say he is very glad to go,"

said Grace, whose temper had been soured by recent failures.

This occasioned a coolness, but they soon made friends again, and returned to their plans.

"You must be shot at by a frenzied lover," said Ffine. "That is infallible. You will see."

Grace was skeptical and inclined to scoff.

"You first take an old bodice," explained Ffine, "the bodice of a dress that you don't care about. And you shoot it through the sleeve. See?"

"No, I don't see," said Grace.

"Then," said Ffine, warming to her subject, "you take a piece of mustard-plaster or porous-plaster—which do you prefer, porous-plaster or mustard-plaster?"

"I don't care," sighed Grace.

"Well, you put the piece of mustard-plaster, cut long, on your arm. When you take it off again the skin is sore and red, and that is where the bullet grazed past you! Do you understand now? Oh, that is very French, very exciting."

Grace shrugged her shoulders.

"Of course," continued Ffine; "you refuse to divulge the man's name. But you will see how excited and anxious and adoring your Tom will be. On his knees, he will implore you to tell the wretch's name—that he may kill him!"

Grace was touched.

"I will do it," she said, reluctantly. "But it is against my better judgment."

They found an old black bodice, and they took Tom's revolver from his writing-table, and went down into the yard to do the shooting. The housemaid was up-stairs, out of hearing, the laundry was empty, and Grace sent Kate, the cook, out on a hurried errand.

They were alone with the bodice and the revolver. Ffine proposed that Grace should hold the garment—well away from herself—while she, Ffine, shot at the sleeve. Grace refused, and suggested laying the bodice on the lawn and shooting down on it.

"I don't quite know what a bullet will do," said Ffine; "it might jump back at us, if we shoot on the ground."

Finally, they pinned the bodice to the wooden fence that separated their yard from the neighbor's, and fastened the left sleeve straight out against the boards.

"Now, Grace, you stand just a little away, and shoot at it," said Ffine.

"No, dear," said Grace; "you do it—I know you want to."

"I can't shoot, unless I hold my ears," said Ffine. "I hate the noise so!"

"Well, you shoot," said Grace, "and I'll hold your ears."

And so it was arranged. After a great deal of stepping nearer to and farther from the wall, with Grace holding her hands over Ffine's ears, they decided on three paces away from the fence.

"Don't hold my ears so tight," said Ffine. Grace loosened her hold.

"Oh, now I can hear everything," said Ffine, impatiently; "hold tighter."

"How pale you are!" said Grace, bending forward and looking at her.

"So are you," snapped Ffine.

"Goodness! Here's the cook coming back!" said Grace. "Hurry up and shoot."

Ffine hurried up and shot. Grace shrieked, and Ffine dropped the revolver. They never knew how it happened that the yard was suddenly full of people, and that there were two policemen holding the cook, who was struggling and shouting and kicking. The negro servant from the other side of the fence had come in, and was accusing the cook of already having tried to murder her three or four times by throwing poison and carbolic acid over the fence at her, all of which the cook convulsively denied.

Grace said she would explain to the policeman, and there was a profound silence while she explained. She said that it was not the cook, but Ffine, who had done the shooting, and that it was really on account of her (Grace's) husband that it had all occurred, because in order to win him back——

At this point, the policeman took

hold of Grace with one hand and of Fifine with the other, and said to the policeman who was holding the cook: "Bring them all along to the police-station."

Only by Fifine's great presence of mind were they saved. She was small and ingenuous, as she looked up at the officer who held her, and deliberately winked at him. She said, softly: "Take us into the house, and I'll explain—satisfactorily." With her free hand, she had dived into her pocket for a purse that she now held carelessly before her, and it was fat and full.

They were taken inside, and the policemen got forty dollars and went away, after having told the fair culprits to behave themselves in the future.

The two girls wept hysterically in each other's arms, and the cook left without notice, after getting very drunk and abusive.

Grace and Fifine went down, late in the afternoon, and unpinned the bodice from the fence.

"Did you hit it?" said Grace, as Fifine examined the garment.

"No," said Fifine; "but the bullet did go through the fence, so it wasn't such a bad shot, after all."

IV

IN QUARANTINE

DEAREST FIFINE:

Do not come to the house. Poor, sweet Brat has the measles. We are very unhappy, and I am exceedingly anxious. She is so good and gentle that I am afraid she is going to die. Oh, if she were to die! And I have so often been unkind to her! She talks about her mother in a low, weak voice; and as poor, dear mamma died when she was only four months old, she—the Brat, I mean—cannot really remember her, and I am dreadfully afraid that it may be a call, or a sign.

I wept bitterly and begged her not to; and I was greatly comforted when

she asked me whether I would give her my diamond sunburst, because it showed that she was still taking an interest in earthly things. Of course, I shall not give her the sunburst.

Tom is most unkind. When I asked him to sit in the dark room and hold her hand while I had dinner, and to come down afterward and have dinner by himself, he said, "Bosh!" and other cruel things. Besides, Fifine, I have reason to believe that the Woman of the Bill of Fare is living in his office-building, down-town! What reason, you will ask? Listen. He said yesterday that he was going back to his office in the evening, to make up some arrears of work. It immediately flashed upon me that it was that creature, and that the office and the arrears were a blind. So I followed him, closely veiled, in a cab. He went down in a car, and, my dear, he *did* go to the office! Of course, she lives there and is near him all day. I am unspeakably miserable!

What is good for mucilage in the hair? The poor, darling Brat has been arranging her scrap-book, and had the gum-bottle on her pillow. When I came in, she sank back exhausted, and all the gum poured out on her head. She looks dreadful. We dare not have her shampooed. She is very sweet about it, and does not seem to care, poor little angel, but she frequently asks me to kiss her on her forehead, and, what with the measles and the mucilage, it is very unpleasant for me.

My love to you, dearest, and my kind regards to your dear father.

GRACE.

MY DARLING GRACIE:

I should say alcohol. How dreadful about the creature in the office! I should go down and see her and speak to her. Make yourself very pretty. You might put on a little rouge, and the large, white hat. If she is there, you can crush her. If your suspicions are unfounded, it will delight your husband to see you—men love a ray of sunshine in their

dingy, dreary offices, in the midst of a hard day's work. When I marry Reginald, I shall always go to his office, rustling in in airy toilettes and being a ray of sunshine to him.

Do not fret about the measles. I had diphtheria once, which is much worse.

Your loving

FIFINE.

MY DEAR FIFINE:

I wish you had not told me about the ray of sunshine, and I wish I had not put on the large, white hat. Besides, that rouge looked dreadful in the daylight. I saw myself in a glass on the elevated train, and I looked positively purple. I have been very much insulted down-town. When I told the clerk in the outer office that I wished to see Mr. Carrington, he grinned, and said the gentleman was busy. When I told him I was his wife, he said something that sounded like "nit," and a horrid little boy, sitting in a corner, laughed. He finally blew through a tube, and said:

"A lady wants to see you"; and in answer to something inaudible, said: "I don't know."

Tom came out in his shirt-sleeves, and seemed quite startled when he saw me, and asked me what on earth had happened. I could have sworn he had the creature inside his private office, and I asked him who was with him. "Why, a couple of lawyers and another man," he said, crossly. I did not believe him. I insisted upon seeing for myself. I pushed past him and quickly went into the inner room. Some horrid men that were there stared most impertinently, and when I went out again I heard them laugh. Tom was exceedingly rude, and I swept out of the place much ruffled. I did not feel as if I had been a ray of sunshine. Then a man in the elevator stepped on my dress and tore a large piece of the frilling off. I had to pin it up in the hall down-stairs, which was crowded with men, and two tough young fellows

made remarks about my petticoats and my shoes, and also about my hat. They said, "Where did you get that hat?" to a tune of some kind. I reached home very sick and upset, and so far forgot myself as to speak rudely to the poor, sick child, when she asked for some marsh-mallows for her throat. She wept, and has spoken about mother again. I wish we were all dead.

GRACE.

DEAR FIFINE:

You might have written to me. As soon as the Brat is well, or rather is tired of pretending to be sick, for she is shamming most of the time, I shall leave Tom forever. All is over between us.

To-day, Sunday, after he had been reading his vulgar newspapers all the morning, I said, bitterly: "I shall go out for a walk."

He said: "All right, dear!"

I went to the door, and said: "Good-bye." Do you know what he answered? He answered:

"Good-bye." Actually!

I said: "You are very insulting."

He said: "Why?" and seemed quite astonished.

I said: "When a woman stands at the door and says good-bye, she does not mean you to answer good-bye. She means you to exclaim: 'No, don't go!'" Then I burst into tears.

My dear, he took me in his arms and kissed me, but he was laughing! He laughed and laughed, long and loud, in his vulgar, horrid way; so I came up-stairs to write to you and tell you that all is over between Tom and myself. He does not love me, and everybody knows that marriage without love is immoral. I shall go and live with Aunt Eugenia—the one you see here sometimes, with those awful bonnets. Or, I could give lessons—young women alone in the world always give lessons. I hear Tom coming up-stairs. He will be sorry—very sorry—when he is left alone with the Brat, who has such horrid manners at

table and always eats more than is good for her.

Poor Tom! Poor Brat! How unhappy they will be!

Good-bye! good-bye!

Your miserable

GRACE.

V

THE RUBY RING

"THIS is my last suggestion," said Fifine, who had hurried around to see her friend. "I lay awake all night, thinking it out—it is perfect! What you want is to make him jealous, is it not?"

"I do not know what I want," said Grace, "nor why I want it, nor how I am going to get it."

"Oh, that is only a frame of mind," said Fifine, cheerfully. "Now listen to me. This is a great idea, and by carrying it out carefully you are, at last, sure to win him back."

"Any deaths, or policemen, or being rays of sunshine in it?" asked Grace.

"No, dear," replied Fifine. "It is simply this. In order to make Tom jealous, you must have another man who adores you. If he adores you, he sends you presents, flowers, letters, jewels. Well, you get a man to send you a priceless gem——"

"Fifine," said Grace, "I have not a man who will send me a priceless gem."

"Of course not," said Fifine. "But this is what you do. You go to a jeweler; you select a ring; you pay and take it on approval. Then you send it to yourself, with a bunch of flowers and a love-letter. Your husband finds all. He makes a scene of jealousy. You win him back. Then you return the ring to the jeweler, who refunds you the money. There you are!"

Grace was thoughtful for a few moments. Then she said:

"I think this is the best thing you have hit on yet."

And Fifine replied, happily:

"I do not know what can have been the matter with me that I did not think of it before."

They discussed the details. Grace had sixty dollars, and Fifine knew a jeweler, not far off. They went out, hurriedly.

"I should like to do it to-day," said Grace. "Tom was particularly hard and unconcerned this morning. He ate a huge breakfast. I think it is so heartless of a man to eat a great deal! And how he sleeps! He goes to sleep on the slightest provocation. I cannot leave him alone, or not speak to him for ten minutes, without being sure that he goes to sleep."

"That is horrid," said Fifine; and they walked a little faster.

At the jeweler's, Fifine asked a pale young man for Mr. Rosenstein, and Mr. Rosenstein came from the back of the store, rubbing suave hands and smiling engaging smiles.

To him, Fifine explained:

"We wish to look at some rings—handsome rings—what one would call priceless gems."

"It must not cost more than sixty dollars," added Grace; but Rosenstein's benign head was turned away, and his obliging back was bent over the show-cases in the window.

"You are inclined to be swayed by phrases, Fifine," said Grace to her friend; "phrases one reads in novels, such as 'a priceless gem,' and 'being a stranger' to a person, and being 'a ray of sunshine,' and all that. It is really very misleading and never turns out right."

But Rosenstein had returned, and was showing them a diamond ring at two thousand dollars, an emerald ring at eighteen hundred dollars, and a pearl-and-diamond ring at only four hundred dollars.

"We want something cheaper," said Grace; "much cheaper."

He looked at the two ladies a moment, then went to the end of the store and brought back a ring—some small diamonds around a large ruby.

"That's pretty," said Fifine.

"And what a wonderful ruby," said Grace; "so dark and rich!"

"Vahnderful! I should say," agreed Rosenstein, with a smile that brought

his nose down over his teeth and made his beard stick out.

"How much?" said Grace.

"Only two hahndred and feefty dahlars," said Rosenstein.

But Ffine turned to Grace:

"*Laisse-moi faire.*" Then, turning to Rosenstein: "Nonsense, Mr. Rosenstein. You ask two hundred and fifty, but you mean two, and you would take a hundred and fifty, and you are going to get a hundred. Of which we will give you sixty on account."

"Ach! vaht a vahnderful calculator!" exclaimed Rosenstein, clasping ecstatic hands. "Vaht a beesiness voman! Vaht I gif to haf such a beesiness voman in my beesiness!"

But Ffine was unmoved by flattery, and refused to give more than a hundred dollars for the ring.

"Ach, mein Gott!" cried Rosenstein, shrilly; "dat ruby alone is worth two hahndred dahlars!"

However, when Ffine had walked twice to the door, and Grace had spoken in a stage-whisper about going back to see that other ring they showed in the other store, Rosenstein, with a chastened countenance, put the ring into a little blue-velvet box, and accepted the sixty dollars on account.

He took Grace's address and her promise to pay the forty dollars, or return the ring, the next morning. The two friends went home in a pleasant flutter of excitement, the ring reposing in Ffine's little black-velvet reticule.

"Oh, we forgot the flowers!" exclaimed Ffine.

"And we have barely time to write the letter before Tom gets home," added Grace.

"I'll run and order the flowers. Hold my satchel," said Ffine, handing her the little bag. "The ring is in it. You go up-stairs and write the letter yourself; and don't be afraid of making it passionate," she added.

"Oh, Ffine! What shall I say? It seems so silly to write to one's self."

"Say, 'My adored Gracie, this little ruby ring is only a wretched token—' and that kind of thing, you know. And mind you disguise your hand-

writing, and don't use your own letter-paper. And you might sign it, 'Your Slave,' which is appropriate and vague."

Ffine was gone, in a flutter of light skirts and buoyant curls.

Grace entered her house, carrying the satchel with the ring in it, nervously, and repeating to herself, "My adored Gracie, this little ruby ring is only a wretched token—this wretched ruby ring is only a little token——"

In her desk, she found some plain letter-paper, and used it all up in writing, "My adored Gracie," in different handwritings on every sheet. Thoroughly disheartened, she determined to wait for Ffine. Meanwhile, she opened the little bag, and took the ring out. In the bag, there were some other things, which she peeped at—a dainty, jeweled scent-bottle, two prescriptions for hair-washes, and a visiting-card, which she had not time to read, as she hurriedly stuffed the things back just before Ffine came in.

"Now help me to write this letter," she said, taking the large bunch of roses from Ffine and kissing her on the cheek.

But Ffine was "desolated." "*Ma toute chérie*, I have an appointment with Reginald to take afternoon tea at Rector's at four, and it is now nearly half-past five. He is certainly waiting for me—I have trained him well—but I never like to make him wait *more* than an hour and forty minutes!"

With many parting recommendations, on the landing, as to the wording of the letter and the attitude to adopt in regard to Tom's scene of jealousy, Ffine left.

Grace returned to the sitting-room, uneasy and excited. She saw a visiting-card lying on the floor, and picked it up. "Mr. R. B. Wilkins, 22 Madison Square," she mused. "I wonder who he is. I must have stolen this from Ffine. Well," and she tossed the card upon the table, "I don't suppose she will miss it. And now for this horrible love-letter."

But she did not write it. The soft

afternoon light shone in through the windows, warmed to pink and cooled again into light, gentle gray; and she still sat before the sheets of note-paper with, "My adored Gracie," scrawled on them, staring at the large bunch of roses and the little case with the ring.

"I cannot do it!" she exclaimed, at last, crumpling up the sheets. "It is an insane French notion of Fifine's!" And, hearing Tom's footsteps on the stairs, she hurriedly threw the papers away, and turned to face her husband, with a sweet, open smile.

He kissed her, and glanced over her fair head at the table.

"Whom are the flowers from?" he asked, patting her cheek.

"From—from Fifine," said Grace.

"Why, what makes her send you flowers?" said Tom, lightly, taking the roses up and smelling them. The little case lay blue and conspicuous on the table. Grace flushed scarlet.

"She did not send them," she stammered; "she—she went out for them; I mean, she brought them—yes," ended Grace, suddenly finding her husband's eyes fixed inquiringly on her.

"Why, Grace! What are you blushing about?" asked Tom.

"I'm not," said Grace, with a stiff smile.

"You look as if you were trying to tell a fib."

Grace laughed, nervously, and backed away, toward the table. She stood between it and Tom, looking up at her husband, with a petrified and propitiating smile.

"What on earth are you doing?" he asked. "What is the matter?" And, as she did not answer immediately, he forced her to one side, and looked at the table.

Grace's hand shot out toward the little blue box, but Tom caught her wrist, and held it.

"Why, what——?"

"Oh, don't!" said Grace, wildly, clutching at the box; "don't. I am not ready yet—I mean—oh, you're hurting my hand!"

Tom let her hand go at once, and opened the jewel-case.

"The deuce!" he said. "Whose is this? Fifine's?"

"No," said Grace, promptly.

"Yours?"

Grace nodded, carelessly. She was unprepared, and did not know what to say.

"Indeed?" said her husband. "New, isn't it?"

"Yes," said Grace. Then she added, precipitately: "Why, no; I have had it ever so long."

"Have you?" said Tom again, and he was rather pale about the nose and lips.

"Gracie," he continued, after a moment, "what are you telling me falsehoods for? Did you buy the thing?"

"I!" exclaimed Grace, and swallowed twice, with dry lips; "buy it! Why, how silly! Why should I buy it?"

"I did not suppose you did," said Tom. "Who gave it to you?" He asked the question very quietly, not looking at her.

"Nobody; really, Tom—nobody at all. I—I——"

She stopped, following Tom's gaze, which was resting on a little card, lying face downward on the table. She saw him take the card and read it. Then he raised his eyes, dark with anger and astonishment, to hers.

"Who is this?" he said. "Who is R. B. Wilkins?"

"I don't know," said Grace.

"You don't know?" cried Tom, stepping close to her; "you don't know? Here is a man who sends you flowers and jewelry, with his card, and you say you don't know him!"

Like lightning, it flashed upon Grace that she was doing it! actually doing it! She was in the midst of it, before she had known that it had begun. She was winning him back; she was keeping up the *Houp-là*. Everything was as it should be; and this was the scene of jealousy. The faintest of smiles crept over her face.

"Will you answer me?" said Tom.

"What are you laughing at? Who is this Wilkins, and how does he dare to send you a ring?"

He was very near to her, and his voice was harsh and hoarse.

"Oh, don't, Tom! don't! You frighten me," she said.

"Will you answer me?" he cried. "Where have you met this man?"

"Nowhere! nowhere! I don't know him," she said, weakly.

Her husband put his hands into his pockets.

"Ah, you don't know him!" he observed, sarcastically. "At least, you will admit having seen him?"

She felt that she must admit this, if she was to keep up the fiction at all; so she said that she had seen him—just seen him.

"Ah, you have! How often?" inquired her husband, blandly.

She said, hesitatingly, "Once or twice."

"Ah, once or twice! And will you tell me, madame," roared Tom, "how you account for your conduct in allowing a man whom you have seen once or twice to make you presents of jewelry?"

She could not account for it.

She had to answer innumerable questions, and she had to answer them quickly, before she had made up her mind what to say.

Had this man been to the house?—to his, Tom's, house, sneaking around when he was out? No, he had not. She swore it; she went on her knees and swore it, and began to feel very frightened.

Where had she met him? When had she spoken to him? Never! She had never spoken to him! She had just happened to—to—to—to see him. *Where* had she seen him? She did not know; she could not remember. Out—just in the street—she meant just by chance, looking out of the window.

So Tom came to the conclusion that she had been conducting a vulgar flirtation from the window, and, declaring that she ought to be ashamed of herself, he went out to

tell Mr. Wilkins, of 22 Madison Square, what he thought of him.

When Grace heard the door close, she flew down-stairs, and called him back.

"Oh, Tom, don't," she cried; "you must not. It is all nonsense!" And then, hysterically, between laughter and tears, she added: "Why, the man does not know me; he does not even know who I am."

"Do you mean to say," cried Tom, angrily, "that the fellow does not know you are my wife?"

"No, no!" cried Grace, wildly; "he has not the faintest idea of it."

"Well, the sooner he finds out, the better," said Tom, as he reëntered the house, slammed the door, and went up-stairs.

Grace sat down limply in the hall, and thought things over. She could imagine *Fifine* under the circumstances, going up-stairs and putting on an appropriate gown—something snaky and sinuous; doing her hair mysteriously in heavy *bandeaux à la Paul Verlaine*, or *Duse*, or *Maeterlinck*, or something—Grace's ideas were somewhat vague.

So she went up-stairs to dress for the part of the wicked, but beautiful, deceiver.

Meanwhile, her husband was in the sitting-room, packing up the ring and the flowers in a piece of newspaper, to send back to Mr. Wilkins.

"Damn Mr. Wilkins!" he was saying to himself, as he put one of his wife's visiting-cards into the parcel. "Confound his cheek! I'll let him know that Mrs. Thomas Carrington does not accept presents from him. I'll teach this damned Wilkins a lesson!"

He gave the parcel to a servant, with instructions to take it to 22 Madison Square, and leave it there—no answer.

Then he went down to dinner, somewhat relieved. He was not cross to Grace. She looked very pretty in a startling gown and strange coiffure, with contrastingly timid behavior. He was amazed by what

had occurred, but he thought it best not to be cross to her.

Meanwhile, at 22 Madison Square, Mr. R. B. Wilkins came in, and found a parcel waiting for him. It contained a lady's visiting-card, some flowers and a ring.

"By Jove!" said Mr. Wilkins, "another conquest! I wonder what she is like. I'll go and call on her this evening."

VI

THE ROSE AND THE RING

HE went. Tall and impeccable, in lavender kid gloves, the duplicate crescent of his golden mustache divinely arcuated, he presented himself and his visiting-card at Mr. Carrington's house that evening, at half-past eight o'clock.

Mr. Carrington had gone out to his club, "for an hour." Mrs. Carrington was in the Brat's room, listening to the Brat's prayers. The Brat was very particular about her prayers. She prayed for many things and people—for all the governesses she had ever had; for all the dogs and cats and canaries she had ever owned; for people she met in the street, and for people she heard other people talk about. And, when she was particularly religious and aggravating, she prayed for every one of her school-teachers and schoolmates, calling them by name and making things last very long indeed.

She insisted that Grace should remain on her knees during the entire function and say amen at the end of every prayer.

"And please God bless Emily Jones, and Katie Jones, and Mary Riker, and Madge Van Orden, and the other little Van Orden girl, whose name I have forgotten, but who has red hair, and Baby Griggs, and Cecily Martin, even though she did draw the man in the moon smoking a pipe on my copy-book, which I had to show to Miss Courtney, and she said that, if I ever

had the audacity to present such a copy-book again——"

"Go on with your prayers," said Grace, from her knees near the bed, raising a flushed face from her hands, "and don't be irrelevant."

"Amen," quickly said the Brat, who wanted to lie down and think out something horrible to do to Cecily Martin.

"Amen," said Grace, rising from her knees, and bending over to kiss the child.

Collins, the house-maid, appeared at the door with a card in her hand. "A gentleman to see you, ma'am; Mr. Wilkins, if you please."

Grace stood aghast for a moment. Then, with a little gasp of relief, she told Collins to let him wait in the drawing-room. She hastened to her room, and glanced at herself in the long mirror. She was sorry that she had the snaky dress and the symbolistic coiffure; but, as she really did look very pretty and odd, she determined not to make any change. She would glide into the presence of Mr. Wilkins, and, pale but composed, get the ring back from him, telling him quietly that it had been sent by mistake.

She got as far as the gliding in, but she was neither pale nor composed when the gentleman in the drawing-room, after staring at her with bated breath and an expression of ineffable tenderness and admiration, stepped forward with both hands outstretched, and uttered:

"Ah, beauteous one!"

Grace was thunderstruck. "Are—are—you Mr. Wilkins?" she stammered, with a very red face.

"Oh, will you not call me Weggie?" said the gentleman, moving close to her and grasping one of her hands. As he did so, Grace in the mirror caught sight of Collins, passing through the hall and glancing into the room.

"Merciful heavens!" she faltered, as she dragged her hand from Mr. Wilkins's clasp.

But he was undeterred. He took her hand again, and, bending down close to her face, asked her not to

"shwink" from him, and insisted upon her sitting down on the sofa and telling him how it all came about.

She said, "Sir!" repeatedly and indignantly, but he paid not the slightest attention, and was very gentle and firm, saying: "Nevah mind! I understand. I will not huwwy you," until she felt that she was going to be hysterical.

So they sat on the sofa, and Mr. Wilkins held her hand, and asked her questions.

"Tell me all," he said; "tell it to me in your own way."

But he did not give her a chance to say anything, for he continued: "Shall I help you to tell me? Was it not my last volume of poems, 'The Laurel and the Wose,' that cwept into your heart and made it thwob for me? Was it not?"

Grace, speechless and infuriated, tried to wriggle her hand away from his. "Sir!" she began again.

"S-sh!" he said, with maddening gentleness. "Don't, dearwest! *Not* the poems, you say? Then you were at my last lecture, 'On the Fastidiousness of Beauty and the Beauty of Fastidiousness!' Ah," and he cast his handsome eyes up to the ceiling, "I felt that I was penetwating the sensitive soul of Woman that day! I felt it!"

"Will you please," began Grace, swallowing a lump in her throat, "will you please—I shall ring the bell," she ended, faintly.

"What a shwinking sweet!" said Mr. Wilkins, laying his disengaged hand over hers. And there, on his little finger, shone Rosenstein's ruby ring.

"That ring!" burst out Grace. "I want that ring back!"

Mr. Wilkins raised deep, reproachful eyes to hers.

"Nevah!" he exclaimed, in a low voice; "nevah! I twearure this token, this unmistakable token of your affection, as I twearure my life. Your woses I cawwy here," and he unfastened his coat, showing two crumpled roses, from the bunch that Fifne had bought, pinned to his waistcoat.

"This little wuby wing I shall wear until bweath ceases!"

Grace looked at him with hatred growing large and bitter in her heart. This man, this horrible man, who sat near her, holding her hand, wearing her ring, not letting her speak, insisting that she loved him, was costing her sixty dollars, and to-morrow would cost her forty dollars more. She would have to pay Rosenstein those forty dollars, and she would have made a present of a ring to this insulting, this insufferable person!

She wrenched her hand away, and, in an agony of mortification, with the tears starting to her eyes, cried: "You sha'n't! I want the ring back. I don't know you. I don't want to know you! I am miserable and ashamed!"

Here she burst into tears, and stood, small and pathetic, in her snaky dress and symbolistic coiffure, before him.

He was touched. He stood up and put his hand around her shoulders, in a kindly and consoling manner.

"You funny little girl," he said, "you mustn't cwy. I understand you; I understand you so well! These things are always happening to me, always!" And he paused, gazing at her with benevolent compassion. "I know how you feel about it. You did it under the impulse of iwesistible emotion, and, now that I am here, you feel shy and unhappy. But you will get over that. Believe me, sweet one, that I am deeply appweciative, and that I would not wound your twembling heart for worlds—not for worlds!"

Quivering and indignant, Grace drew herself up.

"My *husband*, sir," she began, "I have a *husband* who——"

"I know, I know. You need not explain," interrupted Mr. Wilkins. "The old stowly! I have seen so much of it! Husband, howwid old bwute, I suppose, neglects charming wife. Charming wife weads my poems, sees me, hears me speak to the tendewest fibres of her delicate soul, is impwessed, is penetwated, is thwilled!—sends me a wose and a wuby wing—

what could be pwettier, what could be sweeter, what could be tendewer?"

"Go away! go away!" cried Grace. "Don't speak to me any more; go away!" And she rang the bell.

"I will wespsect your wishes," said Mr. Wilkins, with gentle gravity; "I understand you." And, taking his perfect cane and his irreproachable hat, he bowed over her hand, and kissed it.

"I—I will write and explain," said Grace, feeling suddenly in the wrong.

"I know you will wite," said the gentleman, as he went toward the door. "My shwinking little bird, farewell. Fear nothing; I shall see you to-morrow."

Collins, rigid and correct, with proper, downcast eyelids, stood in the hall, and showed the gentleman out.

"Collins! My cloak and hat—quick!" gasped Grace.

Collins did not answer.

"Did you hear me?" cried Grace.

"Yes, ma'am," said Collins, with thin, compressed lips and acid looks, as she went up-stairs.

Grace took a cab, and drove to Fifine's house. Fifine came out of her bedroom, with loosened hair and many exclamations of surprise.

"I was just going to bed, dear," she said. "What has happened?"

"Fifine," panted Grace, "you know a man called Wilkins?—a conceited, horrible, insolent puppy—an unspeakably impertinent and idiotic creature!"

"You will kindly leave the house," said Fifine, with flashing eyes.

"What?" exclaimed Grace.

"Leave this house," repeated Fifine. "Go away at once, and never speak to me again!"

"Why, what have I done?" sobbed Grace, utterly broken. "What is it? What have I said?"

"You know what you have said," cried Fifine, shrilly; "and am I to stand here and listen to you? and let you vituperate Reginald, my Reginald? Go away, and never come here again!"

Drooping and dejected, Grace let herself into the house, and, as she was

about to go up-stairs, she heard Collins talking to the cook and the scullery-maid in the hall below.

"Yes," said Collins; "he was a blarsted Englishman. And they sat in the drawing-room all night, holding hands."

"Nonsense," said the cook.

"You don't say," said the scullery-maid.

"Then she cried and carried on awful," continued Collins, "until he promised that he'd come again to-morrow, and told her she might write to him every day."

"Disgustin'!" said the cook.

"Sickenin'!" said the scullery-maid.

VII

THE WOMAN OF THE BILL OF FARE

GRACE arose next morning, a wreck. A rapid mental review of the situation made her groan and cover her face with her hands. Tom was frigid to her; the servants despised her; Fifine had quarreled with her; Wilkins had made love to her—Wilkins was Reginald; she owed forty dollars to Rosenstein; and nobody would listen to any explanations.

Even if they had listened, she would not have known how to begin to explain.

She had to explain things to everybody. How could she tell Fifine that "her Reginald" had held her hands all the evening and called her "shwinking sweet," and "bird," and things, without arousing Fifine's horrid French temper, which—she remembered from their schooldays—always meant a great deal of clawing and scratching and screaming?—let alone having to explain how she had rummaged through Fifine's satchel, and used her friend's visiting-cards for her own purposes.

How was she to explain to Tom that she had told any number of falsehoods, about seeing Wilkins from the window, and all that?—let alone the humiliation of having to confess

that nobody had sent her jewels, or flowers, or anything.

How was she to explain to the servants that it really did not mean anything, if she had sat in the drawing-room and wept, with a strange man's arms around her shoulders?

So she sat down and wished everybody was dead.

Tom, who had had a hurried and uncomfortable breakfast, alone with the Brat—she had spilt everything over the tablecloth and had been generally unpleasant—found Grace sitting, dejectedly, in her dressing-room, and, being a large, comfortable man, his heart smote him.

"What's the matter, Gracie?" he asked, although he knew, or thought he knew, exactly what the matter was. She was penitent. She was longing to weep in his arms, to tell him that she had never in her heart wronged him, or cared for Wilkins.

Grace raised a pale face, and said:

"I want forty dollars."

"Oh," said Tom, icily; and, with hardening countenance, he put the money on the table and left the room.

"Brute!" sobbed Grace. "Why did he not ask me what I wanted it for? I should have told him everything."

Unable to bear the strain any longer, she ran down-stairs, to call him back. But he had left the house; and, after weeping fifteen minutes at the window, Grace went up to her room again.

The money was gone. On the table lay a penciled note from the Brat.

I have taken the money to take to school to show to Cecily Martin to make her sick. She thinks her old pa has all the money in the world—she is so vulgar! I shall bring it home all right, except for some marsh-mallows.

Your affectionate sister.

Grace fell on her bed, and laughed the laugh of despair and of hysterics. Then she dressed and sat down to await events.

The first event was Wilkins, who arrived with a large box of Maillard's

bon-bons, and insisted on sitting down-stairs in the drawing-room and waiting for her.

She said to herself: "I will tell him all, and get the ring back." So she was going down, when she heard Rosenstein's voice in the hall below.

"Mrs. Carrington? I must see her at vunce—on beesiness."

She heard Collins showing him into the drawing-room, and her heart beat faster as she faltered down the stairs. She was on the second landing, when she heard a key in the hall door, and, stopping, saw her husband come in. She thought he looked angry and suspicious.

Collins was loitering about the hall. "Oh, sir, I was just going up-stairs to tell madame that the gentleman was here," she said.

"What gentleman?" inquired Mr. Carrington.

"The gentleman what was here with madame all last evening," remarked the maid, with prim, pinched lips; "a Mr. Wilkins, as I believe, sir."

Tom turned and went straight to the drawing-room. Grace leaned against the banisters, and felt faint.

On entering the room, Tom was confronted with Rosenstein's engaging bow and plausible beard. Wilkins remained seated on the sofa, holding the box of candy.

"I vished to see Mrs. Carrington," said Rosenstein, quickly; "I vished to see her, particularly."

"What for?" asked Tom.

"Oh, a leetle private matter," said Rosenstein. "She hat from me a ring yesterday, a ruby ring."

"Oh, you gave her the ring, did you?" said Tom, putting his hands in his pockets.

"I tit," said Rosenstein.

Tom looked him up and down, with unutterable scorn. "Well, Mr. Wilkins," he said—there was a slight perturbation on the sofa—"you got your ring back—and I am the lady's husband!"

Tom expected this declaration to produce a startling effect, but he was unprepared for the wild anger and

amazement that spread over his interlocutor's countenance.

"Vaht? vaht?" stuttered Rosenstein. "I care not whose huspant you are. I got dat ring back, vaht you say? And vaht is Vilkins? eh, vaht? *Gott im Himmel!*"

"I say, Mr. Wilkins, that you are a cad and a blackguard, and that I am going to break your head."

Mr. Wilkins arose from the sofa. "I beg your pardon," he said. "I think there is some mistake."

"Vaht mistake?" blustered Rosenstein. "Dis man try to cheat me. He ant his wife are tiefs. He call me Vilkins, and try to cheat me. There is the voman! there!" And Rosenstein pointed a bony and awful finger at the door, where Grace had appeared, and stood white and trembling.

"Silence!" roared Tom, and turned to Grace. "Is this the man you got the ring from, madame?"

"Does she deny, does she dare to deny it?" questioned Rosenstein of his gods, wildly wringing his hands.

"Is this Wilkins?" continued Tom. "Answer me."

"No," faltered Grace; and Wilkins took another step forward.

"Will you allow me?" he said, with raised hand.

Rosenstein uttered a shrill cry, and pointed to Wilkins's finger. "Dere's de ring! dere's my ruby ring, vaht you owe me de balance on, and vaht you say you returned, you many tiefs!"

A moment of dead silence followed, as Tom's astonished eyes rested on Wilkins's little finger.

"Where did you get that from?" he asked; "and what are you doing here? Who are you?"

"My name—er—is Wilkins—er—and I—"

"Stop!" shouted Tom. "Then who is this?" and he pointed to Rosenstein, who was pulling quickly at his beard, in a frenzy of excitement.

"Oh, Tom, dear! Tom!" cried Grace. "Wait a minute—let me explain. We are so mixed up!"

"You mix yourselves up because you are tiefs, dat's vaht!" exclaimed Rosenstein. "You vant to steal de ring."

"What is he talking about?" said Tom. "Who is he? What are all these men doing in my house? Who gave you that ring, sir?" he said, turning angrily on Wilkins.

"Well—er—" said Wilkins, "I—er—wegwet to say that—er—this lady pwesented it to me. If," he added, with an increased drawl, and twirling his large mustache, "if this is a badgeah game you are playing on me, how much do you want, and let us have done with it!"

Tom was dumfounded. Rosenstein, who had never left off talking, here raised his voice again: "You tiefs, dis is all a put-up jop to steal from me my ruby ring. I haf you all arrested."

The bell had rung, and Collins had shown in Fifine, who remained standing just within the door, listening, without any one of the excited party in the drawing-room having noticed her.

But Rosenstein's eager eye now lighted on Fifine, and he cried:

"Dere is de oder voman, de oder crook, de oder tief!"

At these words, Tom made a plunge forward, and seized Rosenstein by the collar.

"What do you mean?" he said, shaking him; "what do you mean?"

"I mean dat I haf you all arrested," croaked Rosenstein, "for stealing my goots and detaining my person vile I miss a sale. *Gott im Himmel*, I miss a sale!" he added, wildly, wringing his hands.

"What do you want?" roared Tom.

"I vahnt my ring back, or de balance of de money, dat's vaht I vahnt," he replied.

"Oh, Tom! pay him," sobbed Grace; "it is only forty dollars."

"Tree hahndred and feefty dahlars," shouted Rosenstein; "not one cent less, or I haf you all arrested. You, madame," he said to Grace, "for gifting away my goots, and you all for

keeping stolen goods, and for violence to my person."

"Is this your wing?" asked Wilkins, slowly awakening to the fact. "Why, take it—and get out!"

He threw the ring on the table. Rosenstein seized it, and held it up against the light. Then he placed it on the table again.

"I refuse," he said. "I haf missed de sale. And, besides"—a wicked grin crept over his face, his eyes gleamed, and his nose curved down over his mouth—"you haf changed de stone."

"What!" cried Grace and Wilkins together.

"Dat's vaht I say; you haf changed de stone," quoth Rosenstein, smiling complacently. "Dat's no ruby; dat's a piece of glass. Tree hahndred and feefty dahlers, or you all go to jail."

In vain did Grace mention the sixty dollars paid on account. Tom's indignant demands for enlightenment were unheeded; and, while Fifine talked to everybody in excited French, Mr. Wilkins bought the ring for three hundred and fifty dollars.

"You haf a bargain," said the jeweler, as he folded the cheque and put it away in a greasy pocket-book; "a bargain, I say. De ruby alone—vaht?"

"Get out," said Wilkins.

Rosenstein hurried to the door. There he turned around, and, showing all his teeth, "De ruby alone," he said, "as a *vahnderful* imitation is vorth—" but Wilkins put him outside, and shut the door.

When Wilkins turned around, Fifine was holding out to him his hat in one hand and the box of bon-bons in the other. Tom was speaking to Grace in a low voice, near the window.

"Is this yours?" Fifine asked, holding up the box of sweets.

"No, deahwest, it is yours," said Reginald. "And so is this, if you will do me the honor," and he slipped the ruby ring on her finger.

Fifine laughed. Then she tucked her arm under his, and walked him out of the room.

"But we have not said good-bye," Reginald suggested.

"Never mind; we can say good-bye when we come back," said she.

"Well, my deah Fifine, I—er—should like to make a clean bweast of something," said Reginald, when they were in the street. "I like making clean bweasts of things, don't you know."

"You angel!" said Fifine; "you nice, English angel. Go ahead!"

And he went ahead.

And she went with him, arm in arm—for all time.

In Mr. Carrington's house that afternoon, there were explanations.

"I hope, dear," said Tom, "that you will not win me back any more. It upsets things so!"

"Oh, Tom! Tom! It was all the fault of the Woman of the Bill of Fare."

"Of the who?" said Tom, with his hand to his head.

Grace went to her room, and fetched the *pièce d'accusation*.

"This—this is an immoral bill of fare," she sobbed. "Fifine said so."

And, while Tom looked at it, she continued:

"To think that, when you were in Paris last time, you should have been so bad, so—so—improper!"

"It was not last time; it was the time before," said Tom.

"What!" cried Grace, "on our h-honeymoon trip?"

"Yes, dear," said her husband. "The second day, I believe."

"Oh, Tom!" said Grace.

"A most immoral," began Tom, "a most improper—" but his wife's hand was over his mouth, and he could do nothing but kiss it.

She had laid her pretty, flushing face on his shoulder, and her arms were about his neck, when, raising her eyes, she saw the Brat standing in the doorway. The Brat was not jeering or making faces at her, so she knew that something must be wrong, even before she noticed that the Brat's face was scratched and tear-stained.

"What is it, Brat, darling?" she

asked, leaving her husband, and going to meet the child.

"Here's the change," said the Brat, drearily, holding out a two-dollar bill and four cents in a very dirty hand, "from the forty dollars."

"Gracious!" said her sister. "What have you done with the rest?"

The Brat bellowed.

"Cecily Martin got it," she howled; "and three dollars' worth of marshmallows, and the two nigger dolls, and all the other things I bought, and all the money—and everything."

She screamed very loudly, and would not be comforted.

"Never mind, darling," said Grace; "you shall have a lot more of everything. Don't cry."

"No, don't cry," said Tom.

They had a very happy dinner.

"I bet that Martin girl was sick, all the same," said the Brat. "And I did pull out a lot of her hideous hair," she added, taking a small paper parcel out of the front of her dress. "Here it is!"



TO A SINGER

I CARE not what she sang,
And I care not what she said;
But her voice was a bell that rang, that rang
From the land of the great and dead.

Should man's first fathers sing,
Then had they found a voice
Traveling up from the deeps of Time,
And bidding Death rejoice!

Over the primal hills,
And over the seas of Fate,
Journeys the sweet, clear, level voice,
And knocks at the Muse's gate.

I care not what she sang,
And I care not what she said;
But her voice was a bell that rang, that rang
From the land of the dear and dead!

VICTOR PLARR.



INNOCENT

FARMER—Here, you little rascal, what are you doing in my apple-tree?
Boy—Who, me? Just botanizin', that's all.



AFTER MANY YEARS

"HOW did she come to marry an old bachelor?"
"She couldn't get him any sooner."

THE QUEEN'S SONG

By Theodosia Garrison

THIS is the song the King Cophetua
Heard 'neath her casement, as the morning broke,
And the white dawn came rolling in like smoke
From altars where the priestly sun hath sway.

These are the words the King Cophetua
Heard all his lifetime sound through jest and song,
Thrill through his dreaming when the nights were long,
And make a mirthless melody of day;

The song he held as some red wound that stirs
Forever in the torn breast where it lies,
That tortured life and made, at last, the eyes
Of very death seem lovelier than hers.

“Soft is the king's white hand as down,
Feeble his arms as silken thong;
Oh, but the gypsy's face was brown,
The gypsy's arms were strong!

“His eyes were bluer than the day,
Purple with shadows as the night;
The open earth was ours to stray—
The highways of delight.

“We were the comrades of the sun,
Brother and sister of the rain;
The high, white moon when day was done
Claimed us as mates again.

“My hair the wayside rose might bind,
Its thorn my tattered gown could hold;
We were the playmates of the wind,
The comrades of the wold.

“Fair feasts he gained from brook and tree—
He fed my heart a food divine;
The words of him were bread to me,
His kisses were as wine.

“In the gold garden of the sun
All day our joy went singing thus,
And night by night the witch moon spun
Her white tent over us.

THE SMART SET

"A beggar lass and lover bold,
Ragged our raiment, as was meet,
But our Love walked in cloth of gold,
And golden-shod his feet.

"Why should a king's eyes know me fair?
Why should a king's eyes find me good?
Why should a king's will bid me bear
Weight of his kinglihood?

"Across the crowd my eyes caught his,
Across the crowd he came to me,
Strange-colored as a great wave is,
Resistless as the sea.

"He raised my face to meet his gaze,
His fingers lingered in my hair;
His smile beat down my hot amaze,
And left white terror there.

"The gypsy's hand fell cold from mine
What time the king's hand touched my own;
Slow-stepped along the shouting line,
He drew me to his throne.

"They brought me royal robes to wear,
They gave me curious food and sweet;
They bound red jewels in my hair,
White samite on my feet.

"Beggar and king we knelt to priest;
The censor swung, the heralds cried;
High-throned they served us at the feast—
A queen at a king's side!

"Strange that a great queen needs must keep
A beggar's heart within her breast;
Strange, when a queen lies down to sleep,
A beggar's dreams mock rest.

"Strange that a great queen's thought may creep
Down dusty highways of old years;
Strange that a queen's cold eyes should weep
A beggar's burning tears.

"I—only I—the truth may know,
Beggar and bound, who once had been
Free of the wind and sun and snow,
Of very love the queen.

"What though I go in cloth of gold,
 What though my bread is fine and sweet,
 When Love stands starving in the cold,
 With naked head and feet!

"Soft the king's eyes and dull of mien,
 Cold the king's face as one long dead.
 Oh, but the gypsy's eyes were keen,
 The gypsy's lips were red!

"We were the comrades of the air,
 Brother and sister to the wood.
 Why should a king's eyes know me fair,
 A king's eyes find me good?"

*This is the song the King Cophetua
 Heard 'neath her casement, as the morning broke.*



THEIR FORTUNATE ESCAPE

THEY had walked half-way through the Park at a smart pace, and she now sank on a shaded bench; he seated himself beside her. They were entirely alone, save for an old man at one end of their seat, immersed in a book. Their agitated conversation continued.

"Oh, it is too dreadful!" she shuddered, covering her face with her hands, as if to shut out some unbearable sight.

"Fearful!" he agreed, deeply moved and mopping the profuse perspiration from his brow.

"Horrible!" she added. "I cannot bear to think of it. The loss of hope, happiness, perhaps even life itself——"

"Hush!" he interrupted, gently. "Let us strive to think of it no more, or it may grow to prey upon our minds."

"Pardon me," said the old man on the end of the bench, his watery eyes distended in lively apprehension; "has there been some awful disaster? Have you been forced to look upon some awful tragedy?"

The young couple regarded each other in some confusion. Hesitatingly, the youth answered:

"No, sir. You see, we have just become engaged, and we were talking of what a calamity it would have been had we never met."

H. G.



PROVING HIS STATEMENT

HEWITT—Don't you remember me, old man?

JEWETT—Certainly not; if I had remembered you, I should have avoided you.

CROWNED

HIS love, his queen! So am I blessed and crowned,
 So from the rest of mortals set apart,
 Enthroned upon the dais of his heart,
 Love's golden fillet on my forehead bound;
 So rich with wealth, of which, the whole world round,
 Since time began, has been no counterpart—
 World-weary souls have nature searched, and art,
 For aught as good, and, weeping, have not found.

I am as others to the heedless throng
 That sees me but a woman, loving, loved,
 And pauses not for word or wondering;
 Yet all the day I hear an endless song,
 And know an endless rapture, far removed,
 In my dear kingdom, with my lover-king!
 NANNIE BYRD TURNER.



THE WORM TURNED

HE loved her devotedly. He was also bow-legged. Both facts gave him pain at times.

He passed it by with a rueful smile, when she merrily said that his affliction gave him such an arch look, and that, after all, he was a pretty good sort when you got on to his curves. He bore it patiently, when she referred to his walk as his parenthetical progress. But he rebelled, and broke the engagement, when she called her pet dog through the wicket formed by his legs.

"I may not be so overly ornamental," said he, "but I emphatically object to being made useful, so unseasonably early in the game!"



MANY VARIETIES

"A TREE is known by its fruit," said Hojack.
 "Especially a Christmas tree," added Tomdik.



TOO GREAT A SHOCK

PATIENT—Doctor, I would like to have your bill.

PHYSICIAN—You had better wait until you are a little stronger.

THE EXPLORER

By Mary Tracy Earle

MORE times than the child could remember, the family had said to her, "Stella, you must never go near Brook Pastures, for the people there are not nice;" and she had obeyed to the extent of never going near the house. As for the pastures themselves, lying on either side of the brook and far below the house, she had not thought that they counted; for there were no bad people in the pastures, only cows, which, of all animals, are least likely to corrupt the manners of a child.

But there came a morning when she heard the family talking together, and learned that the bad people's house had been bought for Gertrude and Rossiter. Gertrude was the child's sister, and Rossiter had suddenly become Gertrude's husband—a circumstance that gave the whole family a right to help him plan what next he wished to do. The family had decided to send him to the bad people's house, with Gertrude; Stella fancied it was as a sort of punishment for having married without saying so beforehand, and she wondered if that was what the bad people had done, and if now they had said they were sorry, and could go away. But nobody acted as if it were a punishment, unless it was the child's grandmama, who drew a long face, and said that she disliked to see a young couple begin life in such a tainted atmosphere. The head of the house had frowned at that, and had said, "Nonsense! As soon as the premises are vacant, there'll be no atmosphere left in them." And Stella, who could not have defined atmosphere, wondered if the bad people

were going to compress it and carry it away in their trunks; and, if so, how?

Naturally, her mind ran on Brook Pastures all day long, and, where her mind ran, her feet were apt to follow soon. At first, they went only to the brook, and active feet could follow as far as that in a half-hour's dash, all the way down hill from the big house where she lived. It was convenient for Stella to live on a hill; for, when she was leaving home on errands of her own, she had to do scarcely more than go to the brow of the hill and look off, and the force of gravity would draw her down. As for going back, considering the tone which the family usually took toward her when she arrived, she thought it was just as well to walk a trifle slow.

She could remember the very day when she had discovered the country threaded by the brook. It had been a solemn morning. There were painters in the big house, and outside fell a soft, Spring rain. The head of the family took a train for town. Gertrude was driven over to a friend's to spend the day. Mama shut herself into a room with a headache and a maid, and grandmama said, "Stella, you may play in my room, if you will be quiet," and Stella had sat in grandmama's room as quiet as a mouse, but she had not played; for her fancies were her playfellows, and, with grandmama in the room, they could do no more than peep out through Stella's eyes, and scurry back. The gray moments dragged along, and somebody called grandmama to give an opinion on kalsomine or varnish or paint. Stella thought

it would be refreshing to slip downstairs and take a breath, and, just as she put her head out of doors, the clouds broke, and the sun shone through. The rain was done, and it was on account of the rain that she had been shut in. People with such clear reasoning powers must ever be a law unto themselves—particularly, when the sun shines after rain.

Perhaps, she had left the hill before she knew; perhaps, she was aware that anywhere on the slopes commanded by the house her small figure would have been as visible as if her height had been seven feet; perhaps, it was the glint of sunshine on the brook, showing for the first time through a gap where a bit of hillside woodland had been cleared away. The child ran so swiftly that, when grandmama went up-stairs again, Stella had reached a new, low-lying country, where all the flowers were different from the flowers on the hill, and each step revealed something as strange and wonderful as grown-up people find in foreign lands.

She had always intended to complete her survey by visiting the house, but, before her expeditions had reached so far, the edict went forth against Brook Pastures, and, in her scheme of things, the house became the inaccessible fastness of an unknown tribe, around whose boundaries she explored. The pastures, with their caches of sorrel and Spring-beauty bulbs—buried provision to be dug for in time of hunger—were full of the dim trails of her feet, and to-day, when her thoughts reached them, she merely planned to inspect all her routes, and get near enough to the house, perhaps, to see if its inhabitants were busy packing up their atmosphere.

No one knew how virtuous it was of Stella never to have been quite up to the house, for, in her own mind, it would have been wise to take a survey of the bad people, and find out the differences between them and people who were "nice." Now, as she followed her thoughts, she circled nearer and nearer, curious about the re-

moval of the breathing material, and aware that her chances of learning the earmarks of badness were growing slender; because, though she had looked in the mirror for them sometimes, after the family had reproved her, by the time she had grown interested in seeing them they had always disappeared. But, with these people, they must be permanent.

The whole place was so still that suddenly she decided she was too late, that the people had already moved away. In that case, the house was simply Gertrude's house, and, of course, to go up close and look at it was the most natural thing in the world.

It was low, with deep porches latticed in waist high. A mysterious, dusky coolness seemed to fill them, but the roof burned in the sunlight, except where vivid leaf-shadows played over it. She stole across the grassy lawn, as if, by going very softly, she could slip away from the sense of silence and strangeness which, now and then, caught at her feet. It was only when she reached the steps of the porch that she saw she had made a mistake. The place was not deserted. A man and a woman were sitting behind the lattice-work. The woman was leaning back in a lounging-chair; her eyes were closed, but they had not shut out an expression of despair from her face. Her hands clasped the chair-arms, tightly. The ruffles on her bosom rose and fell with her quick breathing, and, even while the child stood mute and confused, a tear escaped from under each closed eyelid and ran down the woman's cheeks.

The man was watching her, and drumming with noiseless fingers on the lattice. When he saw the tears, he leaned forward. He had a heavy face, but the sagged lines about his mouth twitched.

"What do you want me to do, Millicent?" he asked. "Carson has put me in the devil of a hole. If I take you away from him and go off somewhere, my business will go to smash, and we'll have nothing to live

on—and we couldn't face it out here. You've got to make your peace with him, and throw me over—that's all I see."

The woman's hands tightened on the chair. For a while she said nothing; then she opened her eyes slowly to look at him, but, instead, gave a little cry and sat upright, seeing the child.

The man turned, sharply. "What are you here for? What do you want?" he asked. He got to his feet and stood over Stella. She shrank back and, by some instinct, turned her frightened face toward the woman.

"I—I don't want anything," she said.

"Then what are you here for?" the man repeated.

The woman cried, "Hush!" and held out a hand to the child.

"Come here and talk to me," she said. "Aren't you the little girl I see down in the pasture sometimes, wandering about?"

Stella nodded, but did not stir.

"Come here," the woman repeated, with a queer thrill in her voice.

The man sat down again. Stella went timidly forward. She was frightened, for these were the bad people, and, now that she was really face to face with them, she began to wonder if people who were not nice might not do most disagreeable things to a child who intruded on them. She looked furtively from one to the other to see the earmarks of badness. Whatever they were, they were puzzling, for the two faces were not in the least alike. With her eyes open, the woman was pleasant to look at, although she was so thin—thinner than Stella herself. She had big, dark eyes, with a soul in them; Stella did not call it a soul, yet she felt it as she looked, and she knew that it was sad. It was the soul of a woman who had tried to think her life her own, to do as she pleased with, and had failed to convince herself. It was the soul of a woman who could neither resign herself to life's sacrifices, nor blind herself to the slow decay that sets in with selfishness.

But the child could see only the longing and the sorrow in the face, and she concluded that this woman had been bad without knowing it, and so, perhaps, had missed having the earmarks come to stay.

As for the man, he was like Rossiter's bulldog, and no one called the bulldog bad—indeed, he was becoming a great pet in the family, in spite of the disagreeable expression around his eyes and mouth. Evidently, it was a difficult business, looking for earmarks, and none the less difficult that the man's face kept stirring nervously, as if, behind an exterior so altered from the human type, there was still something in him that was quickly sympathetic, high-keyed and capable of pain. Stella had never seen Rossiter's bulldog when he seemed unhappy. Yet, surely, unhappiness could not be the sign she wished. She would have liked to ask them if they had ever looked in the glass carefully enough to know what the marks were.

The woman put one thin arm around the child, and drew her up close beside the chair. "And what do you do down in the pasture?" she asked.

Stella stood very straight, and a point of color glowed in each of her brown cheeks. She was not used to telling people what she did when she came out on these errands of her own.

"I—play," she answered; and her big, near-sighted eyes let their gaze slip to the floor.

"All alone?" the woman went on. The question seemed to mean more to her than to the child, and she continued, protestingly, "How could you play alone?"

Stella glanced from right to left. There was no deliverer in sight, and, after all, torture of some sort was what one must expect when one invaded an inaccessible fastness. "I make believe there are people with me," she confessed, "sometimes."

"How wise!" the woman commented, and bit her lips. She looked across at the man, but, as he failed to meet her eyes, she turned back to the child. "I've watched you down there," she

said. "I wish you would tell me what it is you play."

If Stella had only dared to run, they would have seen that an explorer learns to be fleet of foot, but the woman's arm held her, and so did the woman's eyes. The child felt herself flushing hotly.

"I go to places I don't know," she murmured. "I try to find new countries, like—like—" Her breath failed and her eyes fell. She knew that, if she likened her poor make-believe to the romance and the glory of discovery, as she read of it in books, her listeners would smile.

It was then that the man, without looking up, said, "Here comes Carson!"

The woman seemed to straighten and stiffen in her chair, and the arm that held Stella drew her closer. "Ah," she said, softly; and they all listened—the child with a sudden, blinding, inexplicable fear.

The sound of hoof-beats on a gravel-path reached them. After a moment, a man rode into sight, jumped from his horse, and, leaving it to crunch the short grass, came rather slowly toward the porch. Though young, his face had been graven into many lines. Stella was too unreasoningly tremulous to look for earmarks in it, and, perhaps, if she had looked, she would not have recognized the signs of wilfulness, of extreme indulgence of a nature too crystalline, too completed and narrow and hard to be gross, of an overweening pride and a great disregard for any rights but his own. He was tall and slender, and, in spite of his slow step, his bearing might have been called reckless. Reckless it certainly was of other people.

When he reached the porch, he sat down on one of the steps, and, with a deliberate gaze, took note, first of the woman's face, then of the man's. The child he no more seemed to see than if she had been her own small, invisible ghost.

"I seem to be in time to wish you a pleasant journey," he said, including them both with a smile that lighted up

new vistas of unpleasantness in his thoughts.

The woman's eyes met his, and the child felt the arm that clasped her tremble. At first, not a word was said in reply, but, out of the woman's face, her troubled soul looked and pleaded, without abasement, yet with a complete laying-by of pride—pleaded not for love, but for mercy, for protection, for mere shelter, perhaps.

Then her words came, simply enough, but shaken: "We have been talking over what you said to me. We had never dreamed you cared in this way. We thought you were glad to be left—more free to do as you pleased. We are willing to make any amends we can. Nothing has been what it seemed. At the worst, it has been—an experiment that failed."

The extreme bitterness in her voice, as she spoke the last sentence, left a hush behind it. The man with the bulldog face gave her a glance that encompassed her strangely, but retreated. There was a defiant embarrassment on him, which he threw off with difficulty.

"Carson, you're giving us a bad quarter of an hour," he declared. "If you think I have trespassed on my privileges as your friend, I apologize, and, if that is not enough, I am willing to take my *congé*, and bear no malice."

The woman caught a sharp breath, and her free hand went up to her heart. "You hear him?" she asked. "He has meant nothing—nothing in the world."

There was a pause, and Stella, with her gaze fixed on the newcomer, collected herself enough to wonder if this were not the face she had been looking for, in which the signs of badness had been written large. Perhaps the hard traces, which led from the smile of the lips to the look that was like pleasure in the eyes, were among the marks she must remember. She trembled, and felt a new terror pass into her; she could not have told from what cause.

The newcomer clasped his hands

around his knees, and leaned toward the heavier man.

"There is an old adage to the effect that one cannot eat his cake—and have it," he said, slowly; "but some people, it seems, do not want to have it. The case is different with one whose cake has been eaten by some one else. There is no choice as to what he shall do. He must sweep out the crumbs. The other can gather them up, or not, as he thinks best."

The heavy man got to his feet. "By heaven, Carson, you're crazy, unless you're working for your own ends," he cried. "You take up a handful of mere nothings, and draw conclusions from them that would cost you your life in any other country than this. For the love of decency, if you have any such thing left in you——"

"Hush!" the woman cried. Only she, out of all of them, realized that this was a strange discussion before so young an auditor. She glanced at Stella, and rose, still with her nervous clasp around the child. "It's needless for you to argue, or to quarrel," she said to the two men. "It's too late for either of you to meddle with my life any more. You needn't toss it back and forth between you, each feeling that the other must accept the burden of it. I—I have my own uses for it. You may be quite free from anxiety, both of you."

As she spoke, certain of the lines of tension in her face seemed to be eased, while other lines settled and took direction, bringing, out of the desolate hopelessness of her expression, a look almost rapt.

"I have been such a coward," she went on, looking from one man to the other, as if a great space had suddenly been set between her and them. "All my life I have been just like both of you. I have been doing as I pleased, and trying to pass the consequences on to some one else; but now—oh, I have to thank you both for having taught me a great deal! I have begged first one of you

and then the other for help, for mercy and protection; and both of you, my husband and the man who claimed to love me, have turned away. I was desperate, ready to do things far worse than I have done, rather than face the world by myself; and neither of you was ready to take the trouble, or the risk, of helping me to be better—or be worse." Her lips quivered, and she walked across the porch and down the steps, leading the child. At the bottom, she turned, and the soul that Stella had seen in her eyes looked out of them, bidding the two men good-bye. Then Stella found herself hurried across the lawn, until a bank of shrubbery hid the house.

The child did not know what had happened. She was trying to see the wonders of the world, but with eyes too near-sighted to see far, and all her heart had gone out in championship to the woman at her side. She wished to protect and comfort her—to say to her, "If they are not good to you, come home with me." But there was an obstacle to such a speech. The family would never understand that the two men were the bad people, not the woman. They would still think she was "not nice." They would wish to have all her clothes hung out on a line, perhaps, and beaten, to make sure that none of the old atmosphere clung to them; and the child flushed with shame for their denseness and their inhospitality. She gazed up into the woman's face, and touched her.

The woman looked down, blankly; then she smiled, with great tenderness. "You poor little child," she murmured; "you poor little child!" She would have liked to tell Stella that she was in no danger from hunger, or from cold, or from any of the things that to her mind made up a child's idea of suffering. She would have liked to say that she was merely planning to travel to a place she did not know; that she had wakened, sharply, to the need of finding a new

country; that the way to it was strange and hard, and she must find it all alone.

Puzzled anxiety filled the child's face. A sense of surrounding difficulties beset her—difficulties that prevented her from helping this woman, whose wordless champion she had become.

Perhaps, around the woman, too, the obstacles, between her life as it had been and as she wished it to be, were beginning to grow active, and to menace; perhaps, it was the thought that she must part from this little comrade, who looked up at her with such faith, and go back to reproach and brutal words and sordid arranging of detail; perhaps, it was merely the knowledge of all the "making-believe" that she must summon to bridge the broken spans of hope and faith; but, suddenly, she began to sob. It was pitiful to see her. She released the child, and stood with her hands clenched at her sides, her bosom rising and falling with harsh breaths. The look of uplift had gone, and the reaction of mere agony had followed. Spasms of trembling shook her, and her eyes met the upturned gaze of the child without seeming to see.

"Where to go? . . . What to do?" she said, half aloud. "Oh, my God, what to do?"

She passed a hand across her forehead, and stooped. Stella felt a kiss and the touch of a burning cheek. For a moment, she was clasped so close that the beating of the woman's heart seemed to force its tumult upon hers. Then, she stood alone, behind the bank of shrubbery—alone, but frightened by contact with problems she was blind to, shaken by the anguish of a wasted life not hers.

A murmur of laughing voices reached her, from a path leading up through the pastures. She brushed the tears from her eyes, and ran toward the sound. Up the slope Rossiter and Gertrude were sauntering. The light of early love was in their faces. They held hands like children—un-

afraid and taking great joy in comradeship. You would scarcely even have thought that they had reached the point of pledging each other, they took the world with so little care.

The child lifted her hand, as if it held a danger signal. She felt ages old and sad beside these two.

"Oh, you can't come!" she cried. "You can't look at your house to-day."

The two stopped, surprised and amused by her swift, tragic descent upon them.

"Why, Stella," Gertrude said, "what are you doing here, so far from home?"

Stella ignored the question; she thought she had a right to ignore it when she felt so old. "You mustn't go there," she repeated. "The people haven't moved away yet, and—" She hesitated, seeing that any statement of the facts that she felt free to make was likely to have small effect on heedless scatter-brains like these. Only the things which she must not tell might have had some weight. She had seen—by no possibility could she have told what she had seen, but it was a vision into the depths of life, into its passionate retributions if not its joys; and she knew that she would rather throw her little body under their feet than allow Gertrude and Rossiter, with their smiling faces, to follow the woman to the house, or come upon her half-way, creeping forward, slowly, under the burden of her grief.

Stella drew herself up, subtly conscious of the heritage of understanding, which she was still too young to hold in full. But impressive words were lacking.

"The people haven't gone away yet," she declared again, "and—and I think their atmosphere is there, too."

Rossiter drew in a deep breath. "Well, on my word!" he said. He and Gertrude were happy, thoughtless people, who had never consciously set out to explore new countries, or to

study the earmarks of badness. He looked at her, and then he and Gertrude broke into peals of laughter.

There were tears near to Stella's eyes, but she held her ground, as her responsibilities demanded. When the pair had quieted a little, she told them where they might go.

"There are a great many nice places down in the pasture," she explained. "There's a rock that makes a shadow, and a log across the brook, like—like a way into another country—" She broke off, and a hot flush spread over her face.

"Will you take us, and show us the safe places?" Rossiter asked, gravely.

Stella was tempted, but the two were smiling, so she shook her head. Rossiter lifted Gertrude lightly from her feet, and swung her, face about, toward the pleasant, safe places to which the child directed them.

"Good-bye," he called, over his shoulder. "Better go home soon."

"Good-bye," the child called, in answer, and watched them half-enviously, for they were racing toward the brook, with laughter.

When they had reached it, she followed, slowly, for, beyond the brook, the home hill loomed, commanding her. It was, indeed, time to be climbing it, and her feet, never too swift in that ascent, had less than usual to make them winged. Yet, as she loitered, pondering, through the pastures and up the slope on the other side, the spirit that was forever sending her forth on these errands looked out through her eyes. She was a traveler returning from new countries, and, by the very ache of her heart, by the weariness and dust that had settled on her, she was reminded that she had wandered far.



BEYOND THE WALLS

I BUILT myself an Eden, girded round
 By walls through which no pain could find a way—
 Walls of thy love, within which reigned life's May.
 And there we wandered, you and I, and found
 The world complete, the hours with roses crowned.
 Ah, God! an angel led me to the gate,
 And, while I tried to stay the sword of Fate,
 The walls crashed in, and struck me to the ground.

The dust and mist of tears cleared slowly; then
 I saw the wide, wide suffering world that lies
 Beyond the narrow bounds of Paradise—
 The world of toiling, struggling, stumbling men.
 I crave no Eden now, girt by a wall,
 Unless it be a garden built for all.

VENITA SEIBERT.



JUST TO PLEASE HIM

BELLE—Did Jack steal a kiss?

MAUD—I made the dear fellow think he stole it.

THE HOUSE OF THE HEART

I HAVE made empty all my heart for you!
 I have shut out the mad noise of the world,
 Closed every window, made the doors fast, too,
 And from each chamber to the winds have hurled
 Old thoughts, old base desires, old sins, old stains;
 Yea, swept my heart as all the earth is swept by April rains.

Down the long corridors there is no sound!
 I wait but for your entrance through the door,
 Your footfall in my heart's great vacant ground,
 Your voice to sing and sing forevermore—
 Your voice alone to make the old house thrill
 With the vast knowledge that your love wakes all that was so still!

There shall be gladness when you come to me!
 Your thoughts, not mine, shall enter in this place.
 O Love! behold how white each room shall be,
 And you shall make all whiter of your grace!
 Come to this quiet house, this heart of mine—
 It is no longer part of me, but all is thine, is thine!

CHARLES HANSON TOWNE.



HOW

“HE called me a demmed little fool!”
 “Why, how could he say such a thing to you?”
 “He’s six feet tall and has a forty-eight-inch chest measurement—that’s how!”



HURRAH FOR PA!

LITTLE WILLIE (*proudly*)—My pa knows a few things!
 LITTLE BOB (*contemptuously*)—Ho! My pa knows fewer things than your pa.



EVERY married man is a hero to some bachelor.

ROSE LEAVES AND ASPARAGUS TIPS

OR, ROMANCE AND REALITY

A Symbolic Poem, Treating of a Present-Day Problem

By Fletcher Cowan

HE

TAKE the roses from thy hair,
Lady Alma Blanchard White!
Tear those tickets up. Forswear
Thou the opera to-night.
Simplify thy garb of state,
Doff that ermine shoulder-fleece;
Throw those diamonds in the grate,
Underneath the mantelpiece!

They have risen from the dining-table. He is angry all the way through.

Think'st because that thou art fair
Man must rest a goodly thing,
While thou slight'st his household care,
Pampered child of brooch and ring?

*She casts the diamonds into the fire. They burn. She subsides into a chair.
He continues:*

Look! the carbons' glow
Streams through the fire-screen's mesh reticulate,
Tingeing thy hair with glory richer than peroxydine.
By heaven, thou art fair!
Come forth out o' the nimbus and stand where I am,
So thou may'st view thyself from here as I do.
Thou art too fine, too orchidal a creature
For man to look to for a meal cooked properly.

He touches the dining-table, agitatedly, with his hand. The china dances in sympathy with his mood.

SHE (demurely)

Thou know'st, my lord, when we were married, that
Thou took'st me for thy betterment or worse.
Thou knew'st I could not cook.

THE SMART SET

HE

But thou did'st covenant to learn!
 'Twas in the morning of our courtship days—
 Before I took thee from the dove-cote of thy mother's house—
 I broached the subject, pertinent quite as love;
 And thou didst listen, Alma, with such sweet intent
 That, eftsoons, thou wert moved to, many times,
 Make chafing-dish experiments with my digestion,
 Chiefly at Sunday teas.
 These efforts, crude but earnest, pleased me much;
 For I divined in them a nearing day
 When thou would'st rise upon the stepping-stone
 Of my dead self, perhaps, to higher things.
 I had no fear.

I looked with vision altruistic on it all,
 And reasoned that as Science, in its course,
 Demands at times its sacrificial gifts
 Of pigeon, rabbit, frog, that it may gauge
 The potency of toxics and convert
 A bane-juice sinister into a ministrant,
 So might I make a subject of myself at thy dear hands.

She looks at him, witheringly. He fails to wither, and continues:

Dost thou recall that Summer Sunday eve,
 When thou didst make me first a cheese soufflé?
 'Twas in thy mother's house, up-country.
 The sun had dropped behind the distant hills,
 And malachite, with gold and peach-blow scud,
 Frescoed the western sky.
 The bells were ringing folks to evening church,
 And I was seated outside on the porch,
 Awaiting, tremulously, thy developments.
 At last, thy samite-aproned self appeared
 And called me in.

Ah, tell me, sweet,
 Did martyred Charles at Whitehall step, you think,
 With nobler resignation to his doom?

SHE (*indignantly*)

You ate it and survived it!

HE

I took my travail gently, for I thought
 Things could not well be worse, and might improve.
 I did not know then thy designs were speculate;
 That thou wert leading me by girlish fakirment
 To bank my future store on thee as wife.
 It never struck me that it was a trap.
 I know now, Lady Alma, thou wert false!

He again rests his hand on the dining-table. The glassware becomes musically communicative and the candle-shades leap askew.

SHE

Sir, my lord;
 When from the chancel, smilax-crowned, I came
 To rule the seventh heaven of this flat,
 I reckoned not 'twas in the bond that I
 Should figure as the deity of thy *cuisine*.
 I thought my mission was to grace thy home;
 To keep thy lethal interest alive
 By deft surprises in my palliaments of person,
 So that my gowns would ever strike thee fresh;
 My gems and finery, all the this and that
 Of woman's up-to-date accoutrement,
 Should make me seem to thee each day so new
 That thou should'st love me, always, with the zest
 Of fancied falseness to my former self.
 And ever have I sought to make the bills
 Thou would'st receive, as souvenirs of these charms,
 So great thou'dst never feel ashamed of me.
 My lord, I brought thee a patrician heart—
 Think'st thou a soul of silver-and-cerise
 Can coalesce with thoughts of things to eat!

She cries, copiously.

HE

(Going toward her, solicitously, like a big, tender-hearted coward)

Alma, my love, go soft.
 Thou dost mistake the letter of my cavil.
 I don't expect *thee*, dear, to do the cooking,
 But I expect thou'lt see that it is done;
 And that dost argue knowledge on thy part
 To know how 't should be done.

SHE

(Pointing toward an embossed leathern door, with brass foot-guard)

Think'st thou, my lord, thy wife will stoop
 To bandy words with the O'Shaughnessy?

HE

Art 'fraid of Bridget?

I'll speak with her!

(Crossing, with booted swagger)

SHE

My lord!
 Throw not thyself upon the battlements to empty slaughter.

THE SMART SET

HE

(Flinging open the leathern door and calling to precincts beyond)

Come forth, thou kitchen mopsy! Tousled nymph,
Nursed in the lap of regal scullionry:
Peri of pots and pans, unfold thyself!

BRIDGET O'SHAUGHNESSY *appears. Her hands are rested on her hips. She has a general air of alcoholic insouciance. She suggests, in some respects, the Declaration of Independence framed and hung on the bias.*

THE O'SHAUGHNESSY

Phwat is it, sor?

She sniffs trouble, and sets her jaw. The man weakens, perceptibly. The wife retires behind the sheltering palms.

HE *(apologetically)*

Bridget, I merely called thee, colleen, dear,
To speak thee our enjoyment of yon chateaubriand steak.
Thy sauce béarnaise is out of sight,
Albeit still in evidence.
What was its composition, my good girl?
Was 't equine liniment such as veterinaries use,
Or straw-hued mineral paint for steamship stacks?

THE O'SHAUGHNESSY

ARIA *(spirituoso)*

As down by Banna's banks Oi sthrayed,
Wan aivening, wan day,
The little burruuds, in bloithest notes,
Made vowkal ivery shpray.

(Improvissimo)

But nawthin' on the willy bough,
That Oi cud hair or see,
Could aqual, sor, the song and dance
Yer afther givin' me.

(Spoken)

Now, d'ye moind, sor, me bouchal, and ye, me countess agra, if the sass barney that wint wid that shatter-brigand shtake was injyed so much by both o' ye, thin ye'll plaze let me in on the ground flure by raisin' me wages at onct. I'm toired of bein' a pauper cook!

VOICE

(THE LADY ALMA'S, from the sheltering palms)

My lord! Exclude her from the prandilica.
She hath the seizure of her old distemper.

THE O'SHAUGHNESSY

Is it timper yer talkin' of? Can't Oi roise to a bizness ixception widout losin' me timper? Oi niver felt more at payce with the wurruld in me life before.

BALLADE (*with jiganne Donegale*)

Then, it's welt the flure, McCarthy;
Biddy, dance ye to the bout;
Yer the pride o' Doolan's party,
And ye'll knock the fiddlers out!

She suddenly misses her equilibrium and disappears precipitously over herself, through the leathern door. Distant thud! . . . THE LADY ALMA emerges from the palms toward her husband.

SHE

My lord, thou hast offended her most mortally.
We'll lose her, see if we don't!

HE

Thank heaven, she is dead!

Signs of life are suddenly heard, as though Spring had come again. The renaissance is accompanied by the music of falling agate-ware.

THE LADY ALMA (*listening*)

She is putting on her hat. She is going to leave us!

Fading footsteps reverberate, as of a spirit taking its departure for another world, and the voice of an erstwhile misappreciated soul sighs forth its threnody as it goes:

THE O'SHAUGHNESSY

And whin grim death appears, afther few but happy years,
I'll say, whin towld me hour-glass is drhawn—
Begone, ye blaggard slave! for St. Patrick's give me lave
Just to fill another crooskeen lawn.

Exit THE O'SHAUGHNESSY. . . . *Pause. Then—*

HE

Alma, thou poor lost chord of tumbled householdry—
Thy mistress gone, come, while the moment's pat!

He seizes her.

SHE

Where lead'st, my lord?

THE SMART SET

HE (*entering the kitchen*)

Here, in the fane of Blot and Savarin,
The whilom nest of culinary crime;
I'll teach thee, doll-brain, how to cook a steak,
And make *thysself* producer in emergency!

SHE

My lord!

HE

Get together!

She pins up the skirt of her mousseline de soie. He strides to the refrigerator and produces a double tenderloin. It is put on the fire. The holocaust is under the personal direction of LORD BLANCHARD. During the broiling, the light from the fire illuminates THE LADY ALMA'S hair—incidentally, the room.

SHE

ARIA

When splendor falls on kitchen walls,
And silver-siders old in story,
The leaping flame hails with acclaim
The ambrose-food of carnivori.

Draw, chimney, draw, set the wild sputter flying——

HE (*interrupting*)

Pardon me.

He throws in some wood on general principles. Both are much interested. Already, one knows as much about the subject as the other. LORD BLANCHARD stands off and watches his wife's carefully-gauged study of humility, proudly. Finally, he produces his kodak, and takes a flash-light of her.

HE

Alma, my love, 'tis, by my soul, a sight
For invalid eyes to see thee cooking here,
And I have ta'en of thee a snap-shot, which
I'll nail against my heart as token of the fact
That thou art trumpr!

SHE

(Turning from her task, her eyes beaming with the old-time light of silly pleasure at the compliments he used to pay her)

My lord!

She dissolves upon his shoulder. He opens the window, with his disengaged hand, to give her air. When he turns his head again, he finds that she is closer to him than he is to her.

SHE

Blanchard, your mustache is perfectly lovely!

HE

(Feeling that he is being courted again)

So they tell me.

She adjusts the filaments, as a woman arranges the valance tassels of a cozy-corner divan.

SHE

It's softer than it used to be, isn't it, sweet?

HE

(Pleased, but beginning to wonder why she is so pleasant)

Not near so soft as thine obedience, my dear.

SHE *(suddenly)*

Look, Blanchard! look!

(Pointing a diamondless finger out through the air made penetrative by the risen window)

The moon!

They look out at the night, with admiration.

HE *(losing ground, emotionally)*

Aye, see how yon Cynthian goddess rides the sky,
 Lithe as a horseless chariot, chauffeured
 By Phaëthon with soundless naphtha!
 So calm she glides, I'd almost stake my talisman
 She draws her grace from sources practical
 And works on ball-bearings.
 Look, Alma! for she teaches us, my dear,
 The lesson of our lives penultimate—
 The blend of heavenly grace and earthly business.
 So would I have thee shine within my home,
 To thrill my heart and keep my soul attuned;
 Yet, at the same time, lift the tides of fate,
 By knowing how, thyself, to cook my steak!

SHE *(cuddlingly)*

Then I'd be greater to thee than yon moon?

HE *(losing ground, entirely)*

My love! My light! My moon!

THE SMART SET

SHE (*burying herself in the foliage of his mustache*)

Ah! Tell me more!

HE (*passionately*)

My Welsbach!

They suddenly sniff smoke, and, turning toward the steak, they find it burned to a crisp. THE LADY ALMA bursts into tears, which are very much like the real thing. Hungry, but a gentleman, LORD BLANCHARD sentimentiously takes the steak and shies it out of the window, into the beautiful moonlight. It flutters gently down into the Val d'Arno of the back court, upon the head of a star-gazing contemplative, seated in the parterre, while LORD BLANCHARD leads THE LADY ALMA softly into the dining-room.

HE

My wounded honor is most satisfied.
Thou had'st the disposition and, from what I've seen,
No sanely thinking man could look for more.
We go now to the opera.

SHE

My diamonds?

HE

(*Seeing the point she has been leading up to and seeing everything one better*)

To-night, without them; but to-morrow night
Thou'lt wear a sunburst that will put to shame
The hot reflectors Archimedes trained
Upon the ships of Rome!

SHE (*taking his word for it*)

My lord——

I'm humbled.

They go to the opera, arriving at the fashionable hour for interfering with the comfort of other people.



NEW IDEA

PLAYWRIGHT—My fortune is as good as made. I have the play of the century!

FRIEND—What will it be?

"A howling melodrama. I'm going to dramatize my automobile."



THE men who become suddenly rich remind us of a whale. They no sooner get to the top than they begin blowing.

THE WHIMPERYS TRADITION

By G. B. Burgin

LADY WHIMPERYS sat in the yellow drawing-room at Whimperys. Yellow suited her exquisite beauty, made a becoming background to her creamy complexion, her dark eyes, smoldering with smothered fire, her magnificent black hair and imperial shoulders—shoulders, the curves of which infallibly conveyed to admirers, whose name was legion, the superiority of the real to the ideal. If the shoulders failed to impress this fact upon any one, Lady Whimperys kindly assisted the shoulders. She had married old Sir Gerald Whimperys, of Whimperys, and he had paid the customary price for a young wife. She would have preferred him for a father; but Sir Gerald explained that it would be so much simpler to marry her—it did away with unnecessary complications. He could not pretend to offer love; 'twas an idle superstition of a bygone age; but she was a monstrous fine woman, and his affection was wholly hers. Besides, if he might be permitted to mention so vulgar a theme in her hearing, he was rich, Whimperys made a pleasant residence for a couple of months in the year, there would be the customary presentation at Court, gewgaws—family heirlooms—and all that kind of thing, as opposed to the usual dreams of maiden nineteen—love in a cot with water and a crust, and a subaltern up to his eyes in debt. Those poet-fellows sometimes hit upon a truth. After a time love in a cot generally resulted in—what was the line? Oh, yes:

Love in a cot, with water and a crust,
Is, Love forgive us, cinders, ashes, dust.

If he might so far presume as to advise her, there was the hereditary prestige of

the Whimperys family, and—but perhaps she would take a week to think the matter over. At a word, he would fly to her feet. Then he rose, somewhat stiffly, bowed the far-famed Sir Peter Teazle-ish-cum-Whimperys bow over her slim, white fingers, and effaced himself with his wonted nonchalance.

Three weeks later, there was a Lady Whimperys; six months after the marriage, Sir Gerald experienced a new sensation: he became insanely jealous of his beautiful wife. Once or twice, he was betrayed into outbursts unbecoming the nonchalance of a Whimperys.

"You do not love me, madame," he permitted himself to remark, on surprising young Champneys at her feet.

"I cannot forget the respect due to age," she retorted; and stiffened him into a sardonic, suffering guardian of her follies.

"I shall have pleasure in sending my seconds to you, Mr. Champneys," he observed, after Lady Whimperys had swept from the room, with an offended rustle of silken skirts.

"What for?" asked that amorous young gentleman. "Men don't fight nowadays for a woman."

"Oh!" There was the slightest suspicion of a sneer about the exclamation. "In the old days, we managed it thus;" and Sir Gerald drew his glove lightly across the young fellow's face, winged him very neatly on Boulogne Sands the following Monday, and earned the respect of men who had fancied him an old fogey.

But Lady Whimperys broke his heart, for all that—broke it by reason of the fact of her beautiful youth as opposed to his frosty old age. Though

fond of admiration, she was jealous of his honor; yet he bored her. She made him suffer. If he had taken her to his heart instead of kissing her finger-tips, she would have melted. But no; he lived up to the Whimperys tradition, and was about to die for it.

Lady Whimperys, clad in anticipatory black, sat within the yellow drawing-room at Whimperys, awaiting the final summons to Sir Gerald's bedside. It seemed to her the regulation thing to do. Once, in the sweet May mornings of two centuries ago—ordinary people counted the time as years—she had loved; had offered to share the fate of her penniless subaltern, and he, with a wisdom beyond his years, had declined to spoil his—career. "I should have been your career," she declared, proudly, and left him—forever. Sir Gerald, somewhat inadequately, filled up the hole in her heart.

Some one knocked at the door, and she was aware of the family butler impassively remarking that Sir Gerald wished to have the honor of bidding farewell to her ladyship, at her ladyship's convenience.

"I will come at once," she said, and lingered in frowning reverie. Now that he was going from her, she almost loved him. Would he kiss her finger-tips before setting forth upon his journey of all days? Should she confess that she had visited her own sufferings on him? No; she dreaded the Whimperys manner. Intuitively, she felt that he would preserve it to the last.

As she went slowly up the grand staircase, an armored Whimperys frowned at her. At the top, Sir Gerald's portrait regarded her with cynical amusement. In the central corridor, he bowed to her from the canvas. How well she remembered that bow! Then some one opened the bedroom door, and she was left alone with him.

She uttered a little exclamation of surprise. Sir Gerald, fully dressed, sat in an arm-chair. He rose and greeted her with the Whimperys bow, as he led her to a seat. She would have thought it a farce, had it not been for the beaded

drops upon his fine forehead, the icy touch of his fingers.

"Be seated, I pray you," he said, in a voice which he strove to render natural. "I fear that this is the last time I shall have the honor of receiving you. In half an hour"—he gazed at the swinging Cupid nursing Time, scythe and all, on his knee—"in half an hour I go upon a journey."

Lady Whimperys bit her lips, and sat down.

There were some legal-looking papers on the table. Her eyes fell upon them, then indifferently turned away. Now that she had everything money could give her, she fancied money was useless, a lure of the devil to drag down a woman's soul.

Sir Gerald poured her out a glass of wine. "Permit me," he said, courteously; and, as her lips touched the glass, drank to her health. "I cannot imagine a world without Burgundy." He wiped his lips with a laced handkerchief, and leaned heavily against the table.

She bowed in silence. Was the man about to torture her, in return for her indifference? She pictured him haunting her in dusky corridors, coming with noiseless step to surprise her prayers; for she could still pray—sometimes with more fervor than at others, when the exercise became purely mechanical. She never prayed for the army or its junior officers. The chilly atmosphere enveloping the gallant figure opposite froze her heart. She wondered whether it beat at all.

Sir Gerald was speaking:

"Since you have done me the honor to become a Whimperys, madame, you will permit me to remark that, doubtless owing to the absorbing nature of your other pursuits, you have scarcely assimilated the Whimperys tradition."

"I—I seem to have married a tradition," she said, almost inaudibly.

"Precisely. But the world of pleasure has drawn you away from it. It has claimed you, early and late. Now that I am unable to guide your footsteps, it has seemed to me only becoming that I should appoint a successor."

"Spare me this; I——"

"One moment, and I am done. You have already reaped a somewhat bitter experience of the army. What say you to the church, madame? You need a ghostly adviser. I——"

"Have you sent for me to torture me?" She breathed heavily, like a trapped creature. "If I have mis-under——"

"The Reverend Cyril Gaunt," softly announced Sir Gerald's ancient servitor. He, too, had studied the Whimperys manner.

"Ah, Gaunt"—Sir Gerald turned to him with a smile—"your visit is delightfully timed. I leave Lady Whimperys to your care—your care, man. You—you hear me?"

He staggered toward Gaunt, as Lady Whimperys tried to spring to him. Then he swayed heavily, and fell face forward on the floor. She drew his head to her breast, wiped the foam from his lips, held him to her. "Come back!" she moaned. "Come back!"

He raised himself with difficulty on one elbow. "I grieve, madame, to refuse even so impossible a request. The church will care for——"

She held a dead man in her arms.

Gaunt gazed down upon her. Lady Whimperys looked like a hunted bird.

II

ONLY Lady Whimperys and the lawyers knew that, unless she married within a year after Sir Gerald's death, Whimperys passed away from her forever, traditions and all. As a matter of history, Gaunt had never shown that he admired her. He was a beautiful idealist, with the head of a saint and the seat of a fox-hunter. He was generally too busy in succoring the needy to have time to waste on fashionable frivolities. In addition, it was rumored that he was the only man who had ever succeeded in getting behind the Whimperys tradition with Sir Gerald. As the months went by, he found himself thrown in constant contact with Lady Whimperys, who

seemed more than ever afraid of the tradition, although he did his best to explain there was no need to fear it. In doing so, he became afraid of her, worshiped her, looked upon her as a saint, quite oblivious of any chance that she, in return, might reasonably expect him to regard her as a woman.

Of course, the subaltern of bygone days—he was a captain now—appeared on the scene, when he heard that Lady Whimperys was a wealthy widow. Curiously enough, Gaunt was his cousin, and he made this forgotten cousinship a plea for spending all his time at the rectory.

Handsome, heartless, a man of the world, Cranstoun more than ever congratulated himself that he had thrown over Lady Whimperys, when she was only Muriel Helmore. He flattered himself that he had never yet seen the woman whom he could not lure to his call. But the Whimperys tradition served her ladyship in good stead; it gave her a manner of ice—a manner which Cranstoun could not overcome. "Pique," he said to himself; "and, with that rent-roll, I must take a little trouble to secure her. She's handsomer than ever. If I had married her then, we should both have starved. She told me she would rather starve with me—strange beings, women!—than revel in luxury with any one else; and then, because I threw her over, a couple of years afterward she married a rich old man. It shows I must have hit her hard. I'll try her again in a week."

"Why," asked Lady Whimperys, one Summer evening, as Gaunt dined with her tête-à-tête, "do you bring your cousin to Whimperys? Is there any special reason?"

Gaunt hesitated, for his soul was lily-white, and Cranstoun had drawn a moving picture of his woes.

"Why?" repeated her ladyship. "Am I so—so monotonous?"

Gaunt longed to tell her all that he felt; but he had promised Cranstoun his help. "Cranstoun loves you," he said, with diffidence. There was a

melodious music about the words as he breathed them.

She smiled. "Have you never heard of any youthful engagement of his?"

"He told me there was an entanglement that he had to break through."

"Why?"

"Oh, the girl was poor, romantic, fancied he could leave the army to marry her, and win bread for her by the sweat of his brow."

"And——?"

Gaunt's eyes flashed. "He feared to do it—feared!" His voice rang out like a clarion. "He feared to work, to win bread for the woman he loved—the woman who loved him."

"Yes," said her ladyship, thoughtfully; "I always fancied he was that kind of man. Do you think he cares for me? He seems to have taken you into his confidence."

"He is genuinely wretched—dreads your coldness."

"I should think, from what I have heard of him, that he dreads work more. Why do you trouble about him?"

"He asked me to intercede for him."

"Why should you intercede for him?"

"Because I—" The words stuck in his throat.

For the first time, her beautiful, dark eyes shone upon him, and the cold mask she habitually wore dropped from her features. "Would you work for my sake?"

"But we were talking of Cranstoun." He grew bewildered.

"Oh, your cousin will keep. He—" she broke into a merry laugh, the laugh of a happy woman—"he is always so well-preserved. Now, Mr. Gaunt, answer my question. Would you work for me? But I forgot. You have a big income—your living is a sinecure. Curates work for you."

"I would die for you, if need be; but I would rather live for you."

"Ah, you evade my question. If we two were poor—absolutely poor—would you go into the street and earn bread for me with your own strong hands? I"—she paled—"I once

asked a man that question, and he—he hadn't the courage. He was a coward."

Gaunt knelt at her feet. "It is so easy to talk. Bid me do it, and I renounce my living to-morrow."

"Very well, I bid you. Come to me to-morrow, and tell me that it is done. You—you need not bring Captain Cranstoun with you."

He came to her on the morrow, after seeing Cranstoun, who sneered at him. "The wench is trying you—fancies you really care for her. Strip yourself for the caprice of a woman! Take care, Gaunt! You've played me false; she'll serve you in the way you have served me."

Gaunt walked to the door, and flung it open. "You know that I did the best I could for you, sacrificed my own heart. I loved her all the time, but I gave you your chance."

"Gave me my chance, with a heartless doll like that!" sneered Cranstoun; "an idiot of a woman who is eaten up with her own——"

Gaunt crashed him through the doorway, and rang the bell. "Throw Captain Cranstoun's things after him," he said to his own man, who answered the summons. "See that he leaves the place in five minutes." Then he started to walk up to Whimperys.

"The rectory has gone," said Gaunt, cheerfully, when he was shown up into her ladyship's little morning-room. "Now I'm off to London, to earn bread for you. By the way, I quarreled with Cranstoun just now." He told her what had happened.

"I think you really love me," she said, doubtfully. "You are sure you did not do this, counting on any reward?"

His fine face flushed. "I have no hope of winning you," he said, simply. "What could you see in me?"

"Sir Gerald saw everything in you." She smiled. "Do you know that he stipulated in his will I am to marry within a year of his death, or forfeit Whimperys? Will you not help me to retain it?"

Gaunt paled. "Ah! I had never

dared to hope that you would love me. I will marry you before the year is out, and leave you—to Whimperys."

"You do not reproach me for my whim in begging you?"

"Reproach? No; I love you."

"But you are penniless!"

"What matter? I am rich in pleasing you for a moment."

"Even though I do not love you?"

"Even though you do not love me."

"And you can forgive?"

"There can never be any question of forgiveness between us."

"Very well, then. If you will come down to Whimperys early on the thirty-first—be particular about the date—the lawyers will arrange everything, and we can be married in the private chapel."

He bent over her hand. Decidedly, she had absorbed the Whimperys manner; but she did not seem altogether satisfied. "You leave me after the ceremony?"

"I leave you after the ceremony."

"Why?"

His eyes shone. "Because I love you."

"Ah, this—love—love! Does any man ever really love? *Au revoir*, until the thirty-first."

"*Au revoir*, until the thirty-first."

Though she smiled at him from the window as he went down the drive, he did not look back. A portrait of Sir Gerald in Hussar uniform rebuked her levity. She bowed to it, and walked merrily away to prepare for the thirty-first.

It was an absurdly quiet wedding. The Rev. Cyril Gaunt traveled third-

class from London and walked up to Whimperys. One of the lawyers acted as his "best man." The bride wore a simple "going-away" gown, and the few servants invited to witness the wedding were scandalized at its simplicity.

When the ceremony was over, the bride stepped toward her husband, with beseeching lips. He hesitated for a moment, kissed her passionately, and moved toward the door.

She stayed him with a peremptory gesture, her eyes dancing with delight. "Will you be good enough to offer me your arm, Cyril? I—I believe it is customary on such occasions."

"But—but I return alone," he stammered.

"I think not," she said, her fine eyes glowing into his.

"I—I leave you to—Whimperys."

"I think not," she said again. "If I remember, I told you the will stipulated that, unless I married within a year after Sir Gerald's death, Whimperys went elsewhere."

"But you have done so."

"I think not," she said, for the third time. "The year expired yesterday; that was why I fixed to-day for our wedding. You see? I could not wait any longer. Now, will you give me your arm? You are going to give me bread also, are you not? I am tired of shadows, and—and the Whimperys tradition."

They walked back to the station, and left the Whimperys tradition behind them as they traveled third-class to town. Looking into each other's eyes, they were content.



THE LAMENT OF RESPECTABILITY

IF there's one unsecluded spot,
That I should like to own
And fence about, 'tis that small plot
Where my wild oats were sown.

ACQUITTED

JUST for the fun of experiment,
 Just to hear what she would say,
 Once in a moment of merriment,
 In a blue morning of May,
 From the red lips of a beautiful
 Rosebud of girlhood I stole
 One little kiss, like a dutiful,
 Worshipful soul.

Robbery clear, on the face of it,
 There I stood, caught like a thief.
 Blush? Yes, I saw a faint trace of it,
 Pink and provokingly brief.
 But I was sure that she pitied me;
 Silent, she waited a while,
 Then turned around and acquitted me,
 Quick with a smile.

How could I show her my gratitude?
 What could I say for my sin?
 Only repeat an old platitude,
 Trite and transparent and thin.
 Cupid I linked with cupidity;
 Told her I loved her; and then,
 With a fond lover's avidity,
 Kissed her again!

FRANK DEMPSTER SHERMAN.



HINTS FOR AN INSOMANIAC

IF you can't get to sleep, count three billions, taking care to pronounce each number slowly and distinctly. If this does not prove effective, get out of bed and turn eighteen handsprings. Observe a proper regard for the uniformity of the thing, and see that they are of the same size and velocity. If you still find you are unable to get into the Land of Nod, take a walk around the block, and then, if this means fails, go and find a big man and tell him he lies. He'll put you to sleep.

W. A. E. MOYER.



IN the days of the Old Testament, it was considered a miracle for an ass to speak; now, nothing short of a miracle will keep one quiet.

THE BUILDER OF THE LIGHTHOUSE

By Molly Elliot Seawell

THE *Sieur de Montigny* had chosen well the eyrie on which to perch his great seigneurial mansion in New France—a mansion faithfully copied from that in Old France where so many generations of *Montignys* had lived and died. The seignior was a mountaineer. He had been born and bred in the thin, pure, crystalline air of the *Vosges*; and, when he found air of the same quality among the solemn mosses of the *Laurentian* mountains, with the mighty *St. Lawrence* curving into a great horseshoe of a bay, seven miles in circumference, and lying at the foot of the fir-clad heights, the seignior stuck his sword into the ground, and cried:

"Here shall be my habitation as long as I remain in this world, and here shall dwell my children's children unto the latest generations!"

The house he built was not called a *château*, but, more properly, the *Manoir de Montigny*, being copied after those ancient mansions of a former age, which were neither castles nor *châteaux*, but something of each. It was a fitting abode for a man who had a grant of land in New France as big as a whole province in Old France.

The *Manoir de Montigny* was partly of stone and partly of wood. It had a great, high tower, from which the eye could sweep up and down and across the *St. Lawrence*—twenty miles wide at that point. It had loopholes for musketry, and was susceptible of defense from any attacking force unprovided with artillery. Within, it was spacious, with huge fireplaces wherein the fir and cedar

logs from the primeval forests burned through the long Winters, and in the evenings of the brief, enchanted northern Summers. The mirrors and furnishings and plate and porcelain were such as a man of splendid tastes would have, for such were the tastes the *Sieur de Montigny* had brought with him into the wilderness. Every Spring his vessels, loaded with furs and other merchandise with which New France abounded, sailed across the Atlantic, and every Autumn, when they returned, they brought luxuries for the *Manoir de Montigny*, books and pictures especially for the seignior, watches and guns and fine clothes for *Fernand*, the only son of the house, and laces, brocades and baubles for madame and *Mademoiselle Isabelle*, the only daughter of the house. Fortune had early adopted the *Sieur de Montigny* as her own child, and he continued to enjoy her favors by deserving them, for he was of the stuff of which the makers of a new country are fashioned—being far-seeing, bold, literate, full of resource, making money rapidly, and spending it generously and wisely.

He had chosen a wife fit for him—a gentlewoman, with both sense and beauty—and their children were what might have been expected of such parents. *Fernand*, after completing his education in France, was making the campaign of 1730 with Marshal *Saxe*—the seignior, who had been a soldier in his youth, rightly thinking that roughing it for a while would be a good education for the young man. The seignior was willing—nay, anx-

ious—that Fernand should marry, and was nobly indifferent to the dowry his daughter-in-law might bring. He asked only that she should be of gentle condition and worthy to be loved. But Isabelle, the darling of her father's heart and the treasure of his eyes—Isabelle, the seignior wrathfully declared to be too young to marry, at the very age—eighteen—that her mother had been when Isabelle was born. The seignior did not really intend that this precious jewel should remain without a setting, but his stout heart trembled at the thought of losing her. Isabelle herself, some years past the age when girls of her wealth and condition usually married, had come to adopt the same view in her own mind as her father. Some day she would marry, but it should be to some one so great, so charming, so loving!—in short, Isabelle had a dream of love. Outwardly, she was the most demure, well-brought-up of girls, not lacking in beauty, but more charming than beautiful. Occasionally, however, she would show a fire, a resolution, a disposition to think for herself, that would seriously disturb madame, her mother, nearly frighten to death old Mademoiselle Cornélie, her governess and *dame de compagnie*, and throw her father into fits of laughter, who saw his own high spirit reproduced in this charming, slim, dark-eyed, milk-skinned girl. Isabelle, like her father, loved books, and when madame remonstrated, and Mademoiselle Cornélie raved and protested at some of the books the seignior gave Isabelle to read, he only grew testy, and said:

"I know what my daughter shall read. If she did not love to read, she would not be my child."

In the Summer, the manoir would be full of guests. In the Winter, the seignior would take his wife and daughter to Quebec, where he had a house, and there would be a month of balls and pastimes, in which Isabelle shone. After each of these visits to Quebec—since Isabelle was fifteen, and she was now eighteen—there

had been offers for her hand; the commandant of the garrison had been kept busy presenting offers to the Sieur de Montigny from young officers who wished to marry his daughter; but the seignior would not, so far, listen to any. Madame, however, had quietly determined that another year should see Isabelle married—and sometimes madame had her way.

September was always a time of excitement at the Manoir de Montigny, for then it was that the seignior's vessels returned from France, with news, letters, books, music, clothes, furniture—all that was needed for the whole year by the family and retainers of de Montigny. And on a joyous September morning, in 1730, the seignior spied from his tower-room the white sails of *La Belle Isabelle*, the first of his returning ships, and, shouting the news at the door of madame's saloon, where sat madame and Isabelle and their *dames de compagnie*, the seignior strode down the winding road toward the vast blue river.

The little dock was already crowded with people, chiefly women and children from the village which nestled under the wing of the manoir. Their husbands and brothers and sons were on the *Isabelle*, and the vessel, beating up the river against a head-wind, flew the signal that all were well on board, and none had died or been left behind.

Meanwhile, the manoir was quickly emptied. Madame, a little too stout for walking, was being carried down to the dock in her sedan-chair. On one side of her trotted the fat little chaplain, Père Bouneval, on the other her *dame de compagnie*, while behind her walked Isabelle and Mademoiselle Cornélie, and behind them all the attendants and hangers-on of a great house. By the time the vessel had cast her anchor, a boat put off from her, containing the captain and a stranger wrapped in a cloak. At the sight of the stranger, the seignior smote his hands for joy.

"Yonder is the man sent me by my agent to build the lighthouse!" he cried; and the village women greeted this with shrill cries of delight. For the building of the lighthouse had been promised them many a year—a lighthouse on that rocky shoal, which often kept vessels for a long time down the river, as they feared to pass it except in daylight and clear weather. The seignior had sent to France for an engineer to do this work, and had also stipulated that the lighthouse-builder should be a lettered man, capable of acting as secretary and amanuensis; also, that he should not be young and handsome. The seignior had seen trouble come of young and handsome secretaries, domiciled in families; he had known one case, where the brother of a beautiful young girl had been compelled to take a secretary out into a lonely place by night, and despatch him with more than twenty stab wounds. The seignior's keen eyes, though, in the brilliant light of a September morning, soon saw that his future secretary was every day of thirty-five, and might be forty; that his dark hair was sprinkled with gray, and crows' feet were around his eyes; and that he was both lean and sallow. But he forgot that what men regard as blemishes in a man, some women regard as attractions—for example, a sword-cut across the face, if won in defense of a woman, or the absence of an arm, if lost in battle.

The captain, however, had now scrambled up the dock, and the secretary followed him much more gracefully. Madame already held in her hands, which trembled much, a thick packet from Fernand, and the seignior had another one of the same kind, when Père Bouneval called upon all to give thanks to God for the *Isabelle's* safe return, which they did, the seignior and madame kneeling in the midst; and then the captain presented the stranger.

"This, seignior, is Monsieur Edmond Lenoir, sent to your agent by Monsieur Fernand, and by your agent sent to you, as secretary and civil engineer."

Now, one would think that Monsieur Lenoir, coming out in such a capacity, would act as if honor were done him by so great a territorial lord as the Sieur de Montigny. But, instead, although Lenoir bowed, with the greatest respect, to the seignior and the ladies, there was that unmistakable look of the eye and poise of the head and planting of the feet which says, in spite of honeyed words, "I and thou are the same." And there is something in this attitude of the mind which compels the world to accept this equality. So, although no fault could be found with Monsieur Lenoir, it was clear that he saw no difference between a great seigniorial lord and a landless fellow like himself.

The seignior, however, being a man of liberal mind, rather liked this independent air in his new secretary, and reflected that the company of such a man might be highly agreeable to him. And, besides, Monsieur Lenoir was known to Fernand, and had been a military as well as a civil engineer. Even then madame, with her eyes devouring Fernand's letter, was asking Monsieur Lenoir a thousand questions about her son, all of which he answered with gentleness and intelligence. Then it suddenly occurred to the seignior that, in spite of Lenoir's crows' feet and lantern jaws, he was well built and had an agreeable voice, and might be too attractive for a secretary; but, after all, he was past his first youth, and looked the soberest creature in the world. At that very moment, Isabelle was furtively examining Lenoir and privately resolving that he was a very personable man, and her innocent and eloquent eyes were telling this to Lenoir, who was a reader of women's eyes. But it only made him turn his own glance away from her.

That day was a day of delightful turmoil at the Manoir de Montigny, and so were many days thereafter. But there was work from the start for the new secretary. The *Isabelle's* cargo had to be verified and re-stowed for Quebec; there were other vessels expected, letters to be replied to, all

the business of a busy season attended to. For several days, the seignior and Lenoir worked together in the tower-room. In the evenings, the seignior, tired but well content with his work, went to madame's saloon, where the ladies and the fat little chaplain sat, and Isabelle played to her father on the harpsichord the new music sent her from Paris by Fernand's order. The seignior was rather annoyed by Lenoir's choosing to spend the evenings in his room rather than in the large hall, where all the retainers and poor relatives gathered around the huge fireplace. It looked as if he held himself above every one in the house—many of them relations of the seignior and madame—and actually thought himself upon a footing with the master of the mansion. At table, the first day, he had been put close to madame, that he might talk to her about Fernand, and afterward he took the place quite naturally and unconsciously, and nobody, not even the seignior, had the courage to ask him to move lower down. But no one could say Lenoir was presuming; he was too quiet, too silent, too reserved for that. As for his manners at table, one might have supposed that he dined with the King every day, he was so graceful and so easy. Isabelle, who never exchanged a word with him, beyond, "Good day, mademoiselle," "Good day, monsieur," yet found out, by keen listening and native wit, much about Lenoir. She discovered that he knew music, and suspected he could play the *viola da gamba* well.

One night—it was November, and the weather was bitterly cold—madame saw, through the open door of the saloon, Lenoir come down into the great hall from his room, whither he had been since supper, and warm himself at the fire. Isabelle, who played the harpsichord skilfully, was playing at that moment, and Lenoir could not but listen to the music. When it stopped, he turned to go back to his chilly room up-stairs. Some pitying impulse made madame call out:

"Monsieur Lenoir, will you not come into my saloon?"

Lenoir responded as if it were the most ordinary thing in the world for him to be entertained in the saloon of a great lady, and, after politely bowing to mademoiselle and the *dames de compagnie*, seated himself near the seignior. Now, the Sieur de Montigny adored music, and it suddenly occurred to him that his accomplished secretary might also be a musician; so he cried out:

"Monsieur Lenoir, I'll wager that you play some instrument—and play it well."

Lenoir smiled and made no reply.

"'Tis no use to play the old fox," cried the seignior, good-naturedly; "now, deny it if you can!"

"I can play yonder *viola da gamba*," replied Lenoir, indicating one standing in the corner beside Isabelle's harpsichord.

For answer, the seignior rose, and, seizing the viol, placed it in Lenoir's hands.

"With madame's permission," said Lenoir, bowing toward madame. The beating of Isabelle's heart, when Lenoir began to draw the bow over the strings, was almost loud enough to hear. But, with the strange self-command of women, as soon as she felt herself powerfully moved, she suppressed every sign of it. Never had she heard one play so well as Lenoir—his playing was so full of masculinity, as her playing on the harpsichord was so delicately and appealingly feminine. And, when the rich chords and penetrating melodies of Rameau, Corelli and Tulli palpitated through the room, the sconces and mirrors on the walls, the polished and resonant floor, all seemed to ring and ring again with the music. And Lenoir was likewise the most graceful of players. The viol was an admirable instrument for a man of a certain size and lightness of build—and Lenoir was the figure for it. The sweep of his arm as he drew the bow with power and skill, was only equaled by the airy grace of his pizzicato playing. And the expression of his dark eyes, somber, yet glowing,

seemed to add a deeper meaning to the music. Isabelle, sitting quite still, with her hands clasped in her lap and her eyes fixed on the floor, was moved in every nerve of her body with a new ecstasy, a prime delight.

When Lenoir finished his first piece, there was a chorus of praise from all except Isabelle. The seignior was loud in his commendation, and madame scarcely less so. As for the *dames de compagnie* and the little chaplain, who ever heard of such who were not pleased at their betters? Only Isabelle was perfectly silent; but a look flashed in Lenoir's eyes, speaking a language which musicians and lovers understand.

Presently Lenoir took up his bow again, and played a strain of the Cardinal de Rohan's song, beginning:

Ton souvenir est toujours là,

Then he said, in that quiet way of his, which would have been the most presumptuous thing in the world if it had not been the most modest:

"The harpsichord accompaniment of that song is very beautiful. Perhaps mademoiselle would honor me by playing it with me."

Isabelle looked toward madame, who inclined her head; no one in the manoir had, so far, balked Lenoir in anything.

"The honor will be mine, monsieur, to play with so fine a musician," said Isabelle, and, stepping to the harpsichord, she struck the note for attuning. And then she and Lenoir played together the sweet air—played it with so much skill and tenderness and feeling that it was enchanting to themselves and to all who heard it.

Isabelle kept her gaze fixed on the music-book before her, and her touch upon the keys was a little tremulous. Lenoir played from memory, and his keen glance saw the graceful curve of Isabelle's throat above her bodice of red silk, the whiteness of her arms as the lace fell away from her dimpled elbows, the silky blackness of her hair, unprofaned by powder. And

he saw more—the soul and mind and heart shining within her fair body.

He was a strong man and had known great vicissitudes, but this sweet, girlish presence, this blending of souls, which music always means, thrilled him as he had never been thrilled. And they were in the wilderness! As in a beautiful, prophetic dream, Lenoir saw revealed to him, in an instant, a long procession of these enchanted evenings; and, when he asked Isabelle if she played some of Glück's music, then just beginning to be known, she said:

"No, but I will learn it." She, too, saw the vista of delights before her.

The routine of life at the manoir went on as usual that Winter of 1730-31, except that it was brightened by Lenoir. The seignior found him to be, like himself, of large and comprehensive mind, capable of dealing with affairs, as well as building lighthouses and playing the *viola da gamba*. Moreover, he was accomplished in reading. The seignior loved the works of that rascal Rabelais—like-wise of Molière, who, too, was a great rogue, so the chaplain said—and he also liked the sonorous lines of Pierre Corneille. Lenoir was proficient in all of these, and some others regarded with great affection by the seignior himself, but held in holy horror by the chaplain and the ladies.

The seignior soon came to the conclusion that some fault or misfortune had brought such a man as Lenoir into the wilderness; but he solaced himself with the good words about the secretary contained in Fernand's letters, of which later ones had come than Lenoir had brought. And, meanwhile, the seignior was the man to take the goods the gods provide. So, after spending his days working steadily with Lenoir, he looked forward with joy to the evenings, which now were given over to reading and music. And, insensibly, Lenoir became Isabelle's instructor in music, giving her hints and little admoni-

tions in response to her requests. Every word they exchanged was in the presence of her parents and half a dozen other persons, but there was that language of music, which no one thoroughly understood except themselves, which spoke to them with a thousand eloquent tongues. It conveyed to Lenoir, for example, a subtle reproach, when, at Christmastime, he used his holiday, manlike, to go on a hunting expedition, which lasted a whole week. And Lenoir, in the same unspoken language, subtly proved to Isabelle that he had not, during his absence, forgotten their evening hours together.

In that interval had come a visitor to the manoir—the young Count Valmeny, just from France. He was exploring the new country, at his leisure and in state, being of great fortune and condition. He had letters to the seignior, which secured him a welcome. And, casting an eye of favor upon Isabelle, he quietly informed himself of the amount of her dowry, which was large. Without that, her dark eyes would have made but little impression on Charles Valmeny.

For Isabelle, no man living could then blot out the impress made by Lenoir, but she positively disliked Valmeny. He was reckoned handsome, and was certainly handsomer, as he was younger, than Lenoir. But Isabelle promptly informed Mademoiselle Cornélie that Valmeny's eyes were too close together; that his mouth was cruel; that she had seen him, when he had thought himself unobserved, whip a dog unmercifully for knocking his fowling-piece over. As for his great estates in France, his title and his military rank, she cared nothing—so she told mademoiselle, and told her truly.

When Lenoir came back, all of the hangers-on of the manoir were full of Count Valmeny's visit. At the mention of this name, a slight change came over Lenoir's countenance; but his heart gave a great jump and stood still. However, being a man

tried in vicissitudes, he maintained his self-command, and no one dreamed that the lighthouse-builder, secretary and viol-player, had anything to do with a great gentleman like Count Valmeny.

It was the first evening of Lenoir's return that Isabelle's eyes mutely reproached him for his absence; and he, who had sworn never to think twice of any woman, and who saw the danger, wickedness and folly of engaging the fancy of his seignior's daughter, could not, for the life of him, forbear giving her a look that made amends for all. And then the viol and harpsichord conversed together, and told all the secrets of their hearts.

The very next day, when the seignior and Lenoir were at work, came a messenger with a letter, which caused the seignior to ask the honor of madame's presence in the tower-room. Lenoir would have left, but the seignior detained him.

"No," he said; "I have need of your services in answering this letter."

Madame, having toiled up the many stairs, which were trying to her, entered, and was seated with much ceremony in an arm-chair. And then the seignior proceeded to read the letter to her. It was from Count Valmeny, making a formal offer for Isabelle's hand. It stated very explicitly what he could do in the way of settlements—and it was very splendid; and with equal explicitness he stated what he wished the *Sieur de Montigny* to do; and his expectations were not modest. But there could be no doubt about the desirability of the match. Isabelle must marry some one, and she could not, in reason, expect another such brilliant opportunity as Count Valmeny offered her.

The seignior sighed at the thought of losing his little girl; madame shed a few tears. Lenoir, mending his pens, drove his penknife deep into his finger without knowing it, until he saw the blood dropping on the table before him. The letter which was to be sent to the count was debated and settled,

and madame departed to break the agreeable news to the future countess. The seignior dictated a letter of solemn acceptance to Count Valmeny, which Lenoir wrote in his usual steady hand, and sealed with the seignior's great seal.

"Ah, Lenoir, it is hard when the birdlings leave the nest!" said the seignior; "but, as surely as Summer succeeds Spring, they do. It wrings the heart of a parent to write such a letter as you have just written for me."

Lenoir might have added that such letters sometimes wring other than parents' hearts.

It was on a dark January afternoon that this happened, and, when the letter was written, it was supper-time. As Lenoir went out into the vast, cold corridor of the mansion, a distant cry smote his ears—a cry of anguish from Isabelle. He stood still, pierced to the soul by the sound. He heard another and another, each time louder and more full of grief. Lenoir stood rooted to the spot—it was a small, dark alcove under the stairs, by which he passed to his own room. His hearing, preternaturally sharp, caught the sound of sobbing which succeeded the wild cries, and each sob was a knife-thrust through him, and yet filled him with ecstasy; for it is not with loud crying and sobbing that a young girl receives the addresses of a man who is agreeable to her.

Presently, Mademoiselle Cornélie rushed past him and up the stair, and hammered on the door of the seignior's room. Lenoir could not but hear the message.

"Madame begs that monsieur will come to mademoiselle;" and then, like the rest of her kind, delighting in a sensation, she began to pour out a tale. "As soon as madame mentioned the name of Count Valmeny, mademoiselle burst into tears and screams, declaring she would go in a convent before she would——"

"That is enough, mademoiselle," was the seignior's response, as his quick and heavy step resounded down the stairs.

Yes, it was true. Isabelle, cowering in her bed, vowed, with a violence quite foreign to her, that she would not marry Count Valmeny, and she spoke of a convent so often, and so implored her parents to let her go to the one in Quebec, that the father and mother, exchanging anxious glances, soothed her and told her she need think no more of the count for the present.

Lenoir sat in his room, until the great bell summoned him to supper. The more he thought of those pitiful cries, the greater the exultation of his heart. He went down and ate his supper with a good appetite. Afterward, the seignior sat, gloomy and abstracted, in the great hall. There was no talk of music for that night. But, presently, the sound of the harpsichord was heard; Isabelle was playing "*Ton souvenir est toujours là.*"

The red blood mounted to Lenoir's dark face, but he did not move. The seignior, rousing himself, smiled. Isabelle was becoming reasonable; no girl who was utterly miserable could play the harpsichord so. The seignior went in the saloon, motioning for Lenoir to follow. There sat madame and the usual company. Isabelle, a little pale, but by no means broken-hearted, sat at the harpsichord. Something in her eyes, as she looked at Lenoir, made his blood leap. He took his viol and they played the sweet, familiar airs together. Then some demon, or some angel, within Lenoir, acting without his volition, made him say:

"Mademoiselle, I have remembered another air—an Italian one—I learned some years ago." And he spoke the name in Italian, of which Isabelle had some knowledge, but no one else had except the chaplain, and he was not present that night. And the Italian words spoken by Lenoir meant:

"Dear heart, wherefore thy pain?"

Isabelle shot him a glance of understanding, and he played the air—a pretty, sentimental thing. And the same demon or angel forced him to say, when he had finished:

"There is a sequel to it, 'I will be true.'"

Lenoir spoke quite unconcernedly, and the father and mother and the *dames de compagnie* understood nothing of what had passed when Isabelle replied, calmly:

"I think I can play that if you will show me how."

Thus was their love first put into words.

That night, when the ladies had retired, the seignior called Lenoir into the tower-room, and there commissioned him to write a letter that filled him with joy. It was to the Count Valmeny, expressing a high sense of the honor done the family of Montigny, but hinting at Isabelle's obstinacy. Her behavior was softened as much as possible, and the convent idea was pooh-poohed as a thing not worth serious consideration, and the suggestion was made that the count should come to the manoir and try his hand at putting the convent idea out of Isabelle's head, where, in truth, it had never lodged.

Lenoir spent that night pacing his room, and, there being odd acoustic qualities in the house, Isabelle heard him, although her room was far off in another wing. And, as her sobs and cries had filled Lenoir's soul with ecstasy, so the quiet but steady tramp he maintained all night told Isabelle a story she wished to hear, and would have ruined Count Valmeny's chances, if he had ever had any.

But Lenoir had problems to deal with quite unknown to Isabelle. There was his past. That made him wish to shoot himself. And how could he, with honor, say one word to Isabelle in the way of love? Yet, the winged word had been spoken; it could not be recalled. And the Count Valmeny—how well he knew that man! And was it not his duty to warn the seignior against him? But would the warning be believed? One thing was certain—neither the seignior nor madame would force their daughter into any marriage, however brilliant, if it were odious to her. And Lenoir knew that Isabelle would heed all his warnings.

Fate always provides lovers with opportunities, and one came to Lenoir within a week.

One night, when they were at their music in the saloon, the seignior and madame and her *dames de compagnie* and the chaplain listening, Isabelle came to a difficulty in her part—she often needed explanations from Lenoir—and he was standing over her, pointing out the notes with his bow, when a loud crash was heard. It was nothing but a fierce wind blowing to a heavy door, but it sounded like the crack of doom. Everybody's attention was distracted to it but Isabelle's, whose glance into Lenoir's eyes said, plainly, "Now is a time for you to speak."

And this is what fate made Lenoir say, in a whisper, unheard by any but Isabelle:

"Mademoiselle, I love you and would die for you; but, knowing my unworthiness, I would not prevent you, if I could, from being happy with a worthier man than I. Count Valmeny, though, is a very unworthy man. I know him well, and he is a scoundrel."

And Isabelle, who had never spoken a secret word to a man before in her life, replied, in the same quick whisper:

"I shall never marry Count Valmeny, or any other man—but you."

So it is that all customs, habits, training, beliefs and injunctions are mere sport to the great master passion.

In a fortnight came a letter from Count Valmeny, saying he would do himself the honor to come to the manoir, which he did, and stayed four days.

In that time, he saw Lenoir every day, and more than once heard him play the viol to Isabelle's harpsichord; but neither of the two men gave a sign of ever having seen the other before. Isabelle's behavior to the count was undeniably hostile; so much so that he told the seignior he should wish to wait six months, during which he would make a necessary voyage to France, and at the end of that time he would return and see if mademoiselle had become more amiable.

The seignior assented to this, with the greatest good humor; he had no notion of forcing Isabelle into a marriage with any one against her will. So the Count Valmeny left, and, shortly after, sailed for France. His brains were busily at work contriving against Lenoir.

II

THE Spring came, and work began on the lighthouse. It had been so well planned and prepared for that the progress made seemed magical. Lenoir spent his whole day out in the river, directing, overseeing and, sometimes, even toiling with his own hands. He became as brown as a blackamoor, and, when he came ashore in his working clothes, wet and out-at-elbows, even Isabelle laughed when she saw him. Yet no man is at his worst when engaged in the business for which he is best fitted, and Lenoir was easily a master of the science which he professed.

Of course, every principle of honor and propriety required that Lenoir should not make love in any form to the only daughter of the house of Montigny. But what is a man to do, when the woman he loves makes love to him, through a medium known only to themselves, and is encouraged thereto by the persons who might be supposed the most interested in preventing it? For the seignior would as soon, and sooner, have foregone his supper as his evening concert. And so poor Lenoir was in a way forced to take part in that sweet converse, through which Isabelle could say the most captivating and intoxicating things to him; and he, being but a man, could not but reply to her in kind. Thus it went on through the soft Spring evenings into the long twilight of Summer, when the moon streamed in at the open window, and made the two candles on the harpsichord appear like fireflies, and the deep shadows made it possible for Lenoir and Isabelle to exchange glances which told even more than the music.

The posts from Quebec were tolerably regular during the Summer, and the seignior received many communications; but Lenoir had not had a letter since he had been at the Manoir de Montigny. One day in June, however, he had a letter from France. In it was a printed notice, such as was common in that day, saying that if one Edmond Lenoir, a civil engineer, about thirty-five years of age, of good build, dark complexion and well versed in literature and music, would make his whereabouts known, the sum of forty thousand livres was at his disposal at a certain banker's in Paris.

The Seignior de Montigny received one of the same notices, and, calling Lenoir, who, with a pale face and his open letter in his hand, was going out of the tower-room, said:

"Here is great fortune for you, Lenoir. You are the man meant by this."

For answer, Lenoir said, coolly: "It is an enemy who has done this. I shall not claim the money, seignior. I tell you now, boldly and frankly, that it is my wish and intention to remain unknown. I will add that you may dismiss me to-day. But I should like to remain until the lighthouse is finished."

The Sieur de Montigny was an acute man, and this bold avowal made him think Lenoir had met with a misfortune, rather than a fault. So, fixing his deep-set eyes on Lenoir, the Sieur de Montigny said:

"I will keep you until the lighthouse is done. Then by what you may choose to tell me will it be whether you remain with me or not."

Lenoir bowed and went out. He did not express any thanks, which made favor for him with the seignior, who reasoned thus: "He acts as a man who has received a simple act of justice and not a considerable favor. Had he poured forth gratitude, I should have suspected him."

Lenoir went about his work as if nothing had happened. The seignior said not a word further on the subject.

On the first of September, the light-

house was finished. On that day, it had been blessed by the chaplain, and a newly married couple, Jean and Marie Tessier, who had been brought up at the manoir, were installed as light-keepers. They had two rooms in the lower part of the lighthouse, and everything in them was new and neat, though plain, as became humble persons.

The ceremony of blessing took place on the bright September morning. In the afternoon, Lenoir, meaning to see to the first lighting of the lamps himself, took a boat and rowed out to the lighthouse, and Jean and Marie, wishing to do some last errands in the village, went ashore in their own boat, to return at dark.

Lenoir, alone in the lighthouse, gave a last inspection to everything in the light-room, and then, going down into Jean and Marie's rooms, looked about the simple home of two poor peasants. And his vagrant fancy began to weave a vision of Isabelle and himself living there, instead of Jean and Marie. He was a dreamer as well as a man of action, and the thought of Isabelle and himself in a little home of their own was so beautiful, though wild and extravagant beyond words, that it possessed him wholly. Wrapt in this enchanting reverie, baseless and lovely as a dream, he stood still, with folded arms, before the window, looking toward the sunset. And then, like an echo from his own soul, he heard Isabelle's sweet voice speaking.

Through the open window, flooded with the September sunshine, he saw a boat, in which sat Isabelle and Mademoiselle Cornélie, her *dame de compagnie*, and they were rowed by Jacques, the deaf old boatman, who had had charge of all the boats at the manoir for many years. Lenoir at once went down the narrow stairs, and assisted the ladies to ascend. Isabelle's cheeks were a flame of fire. She had not hoped to see Lenoir—their visit was to Jean and Marie. Lenoir was so kind and courteous in showing and explaining all things to them that, as Mademoiselle Cornélie said, they could

not have been better entertained if Jean and Marie had been at home.

They had meant to stay only a half-hour, but an hour slipped by before they knew it, and they were still in the light-room at five o'clock. Suddenly, the sun seemed to go out of the heavens, and a vast white fog began to creep in from the gulf.

Lenoir was the first to see it, and, at once, he hurried Isabelle and mademoiselle down the stairs to the boat. The fog was then galloping in, but Lenoir had no doubt that Jacques could get his passengers ashore. He had just placed Mademoiselle Cornélie in the boat, and had turned to assist Isabelle, when he heard a splash of oars, and saw three yards of green water between the boat and the stairs. Jacques, as deaf as a post, and with his back to his passenger, thought Isabelle also was in the boat.

Lenoir shouted, Mademoiselle Cornélie screamed, but Jacques pulled away, until mademoiselle, catching him by the collar, forced him to turn around. They were then twenty yards from the lighthouse, and, as Jacques began to paddle furiously in turning the boat, the fog came down like a white wall between boat and lighthouse. Everything was lost in the ghostly mist. Lenoir continued to shout, and, at first, they heard faint cries of response from Mademoiselle Cornélie; but, presently, all was still—Isabelle and Lenoir on the lighthouse stairs were alone, as if they had a great, white, cold, silent world to themselves.

"Pray make yourself easy, mademoiselle," said Lenoir, readily, while assisting Isabelle up the stairs; "there is no danger. It is not the first time, by a hundred, that Jacques has been caught in a fog. It may lift at any moment, and neither mademoiselle nor yourself will suffer more than a slight inconvenience."

Lenoir was not quite so sure as he professed about mademoiselle's safety, and Isabelle knew, as well as he, what the fog might mean at that season. Nevertheless, she was thrilled with joy, at the thought of that one

hour alone with Lenoir. She had never seen nor spoken to him alone before.

He left her for a few minutes in the sitting-room, while he went up into the light-room and lighted the lamps. His hand was steady, but his heart, like Isabelle's, was beating furiously.

When he returned to the little room below, it was already dark enough to light candles. If Lenoir had thought Isabelle would be frightened or embarrassed at finding herself alone with him, he was soon enlightened; for never was a creature more at ease. Yet she had never before, in all her life, been alone with a man for a moment until then. The subtle flattery of this was not lost on poor Lenoir. She had found candles, which Lenoir lighted with his flint and steel. And then the same demon or angel, which had made him speak those words to her about Count Valmeny, on that June evening, inspired him to say:

"It would be the supper-time of Jean and Marie—so I will do as Jean would do, and make the kettle boil."

"And I," replied Isabelle, her quick wit catching Lenoir's hidden meaning, "will lay the cloth and cut the bread, as Marie would do."

Isabelle went into the bedroom, and, rummaging there, reappeared with a white apron and a cap, such as Marie wore; and Lenoir, seeing a new fustian jacket of Jean's hanging on a nail in the narrow passage, went out, shut the door, and came back with Jean's jacket on. And then their eyes met, bright with meaning—they were Jean and Marie for the time.

Lenoir was so filled with fear, rapture, remorse, horror and delight, that he could scarcely speak. Not so, Isabelle; hers was all unthinking joy. She laid the cloth, fluttering around the table like a happy bird, and, when Lenoir protested, "Mademoiselle—pray do not—I cannot permit you," she burst out laughing, and mimicked him, asking:

"Do you think Jean would say that to Marie? Instead, he would say,

'Hurry up, girl; I am hungry and must have my supper.'"

Lenoir's dark, expressive eyes fixed themselves on Isabelle, and she studied them gaily, her own brimming over with a daring delight which took no thought for the morrow. Lenoir's gaze was full of somber passion and longing. Isabelle, knowing little, feared less.

She cut the bread found in the cupboard, and boiled the eggs, Lenoir looking on in silent chagrin and amazement, which brought smiles to Isabelle's face; but, when it came to boiling the rasher of bacon, Lenoir asserted his knowledge as an old campaigner, and managed it with skill. And, presently, they were seated opposite each other at the little table, on which was spread a coarse, white cloth, with iron forks and spoons, and a couple of sputtering candles; and Isabelle, whose spirits seemed to rise every moment, whether inadvertently or not called Lenoir, Jean; and Lenoir, being but a man, after all, could not refuse the challenge, and called Isabelle, Marie; and so it was clearly established between them that they loved each other—and they supped together.

And the fog lay still and white upon the river, shutting them out from all the world, as if they were dwellers upon another planet. No sound came to them from the shore. Every half-hour Lenoir went up into the lighthouse, and trimmed the lamps, and shouted out of the window, and listened for a reply; but all around him was closed the impenetrable white wall.

Isabelle had found a great stocking of Jean's on which Marie had been engaged, and, sitting before the fire, the light shining upon her white apron and cap, her delicate, radiant face and melting eyes, she puzzled poor Lenoir as the needles flew between her fingers. Every time he came down the stairs, after these periodic absences, she raised her eyes to his, with a welcome in them that no man, not wholly an idiot, could misunderstand.

They did not speak much; they were too happy. They sat on either side

of the rude table, the candles flaring between them; and, if, at that moment, they had heard a cry from a boat coming after them, it would have chilled their hearts. True, Isabelle had some fears about Mademoiselle Cornélie, but she was only too ready to believe Lenoir's assurances that she was safe—an assurance of which he professed more confidence than he felt.

The night wore on. Lenoir renewed the fire and candles, and kept the lamps going in the lighthouse. Isabelle's eyes were wide and bright; she meant not to sleep, or to lose one moment of Lenoir's company.

As midnight struck, Lenoir started. There is always something solemn at the midnight hour, and a deep silence fell between them.

"Mademoiselle," said Lenoir, after a while, "there is something I wish to tell you; it is about my past life."

"If it be that you were born to a higher station than the one you occupy in my father's house, I can believe you, for I see it with my own eyes," was Isabelle's reply.

"And, if I said that the place I hold in the *Sieur de Montigny's* house is a higher one than I could hope to occupy——"

His tone sobered Isabelle. She laid aside the huge stocking, and fixed her eyes, now serious enough, on his. Lenoir, looking her steadily in the eye, spoke in a quiet voice.

"Yes, that is true, for I am a forger, mademoiselle. I forged my father's name to a bill for a thousand livres, when I was twenty years old. Before then, I was the *Vicomte de Roucourt*. Since then, I have been *Edmond Lenoir*, civil engineer—when I could get work. When I could not get work, I have starved."

Isabelle's hands, which were lying in her lap, slowly slid to her side. Her head fell over on the table. Lenoir ran to her, and, lifting her head, tried to say some words to her, but they died in his throat, and, a few scanty and burning tears, such as men shed, fell on her cheeks, grown suddenly pale. But the sight of Lenoir's agitation

calmed Isabelle. She sat up, her voice returned to her, and she said, quietly, laying her soft, white hand on his lean, brown one:

"Tell me all—all—all!"

"The money was not for myself. My father kept us—my brother *Regnard* and me—on a pittance, unfit for peasants, much less gentlemen's sons; and most of his fortune came from our mother, too. *Regnard* was a year younger than I, and a consumptive. He was beguiled into play by the *Count Valmeny*, and lost to him a thousand livres. The shock of it brought on *Regnard* a bleeding at the lungs, that the doctors said must kill him. He lived only a week afterward, and he had but one cry—his eyes said it—he spelled it with his fingers when he could no longer speak. It was to pay the thousand livres. I tried to borrow it. I was young, inexperienced and distracted with grief. No one would lend it to me. The *Count Valmeny* was demanding payment. I went to our father at last, and told him all. He cursed me, and refused to give me the money. I then went away, drew a bill for a thousand livres, signed my father's name to it, got the money, and paid it. I returned to my father, and told him what I had done, and that I was willing to go to the galleys for it—but it had enabled *Regnard* to die in peace. My father said to me, 'You shall go to the galleys for what you have done;' and he is a vindictive man and one who keeps his word. The first thing I did, after this interview with my father, was to go to the *Count Valmeny*, and give him a good beating. I would not fight him—I only beat him within an inch of his life. Then I fought my way to the king at *Fontainebleau*, and told him, on my knees, the whole story. He gave me his pardon, which I always carry in my breast, and prohibited any advocate in France from undertaking the cause against me. Likewise, he forbade *Count Valmeny* the court. I took my mother's name of *Lenoir*, went to the *Low Countries*, and studied to be an

engineer. It was there I met your brother. And I asked nothing of any man but work. I came out to this new country, thinking I could be more at peace here. I was, until Count Valmeny found me out. It was he who hypocritically urged my father to offer forty thousand livres, if I would disclose myself; but I would not." Lenoir paused. His dark skin had grown pallid with agitation, and there were drops upon his forehead.

"Perhaps Count Valmeny saw that I—that you—" Isabelle stopped, her face burning with blushes.

There was a pause, eloquent with meaning.

"But do not think me capable of accepting this sacrifice," said Lenoir, answering her unspoken words. "You—with your youth, your beauty, your charm—it is enough that I should have given you a moment's pain; I should indeed be base, if I took advantage of your generosity. I will leave this place; I am no longer needed here——"

For answer, Isabelle laid her palm again on his brown and sinewy hand. It was enough. He had withstood all he or any other true man could withstand.

At the Manoir de Montigny, there was anxiety, but no great unhappiness. Mademoiselle Cornélie and Isabelle had been seen going into the lighthouse—Jean and Marie had left Lenoir there; no doubt Jacques and his boat were safe. It was an adventure, probably not unpleasant to Isabelle, who yearned so after adventures, as her parents knew. At night had come a visitor—Count Valmeny. The seignior's countenance beamed when the count's retinue was recognized. He had always hankered after the match.

The count was shown into the saloon of madame, and inquired, with pointed ceremony, after mademoiselle; and then it came out that she was imprisoned in the lighthouse by the fog. But there was no danger, so the seignior hastened to assure him.

Mademoiselle Cornélie was with her, and old Jacques, and Monsieur Lenoir, the coolest and steadiest man alive; it merely meant a night's adventure, unusual, but perfectly safe.

Count Valmeny's eyes were, as Isabelle had said, too close to his nose, and somewhat marred his beauty, which was considerable. He brought them still closer to his nose, and they had an unpleasant expression, when he said, slowly:

"Lenoir is a forger of his father's name to a note for a thousand livres. The note was due to me—so I know the story. I recognized him when I was your guest, during the Winter."

It was as if a thunderbolt had fallen in the quiet little saloon, with the candles making a soft light that did not wholly reveal the malice in Valmeny's face. And then he told *his* story of the thousand livres. It was short, but at the end the seignior rose, and stamping his feet in his rage, cried:

"And it is that man who is at this moment in my daughter's company!"

Then there was a great commotion outside. Madame ran into the hall; Mademoiselle Cornélie, dazed, bedraggled and wretched, was entering, with Jacques, equally dazed, bedraggled and wretched, behind her. She began to tell the story of their adventures, of Jacques putting off before Isabelle could get into the boat, of their rowing and drifting hopelessly in the fog, and, at last, making the shore, many miles away, and walking home in rain and mist; and then Jacques was interrupting her at every moment, by protesting, loudly and stupidly:

"I thought mademoiselle was in the boat. I am deaf—I can't hear—but I thought mademoiselle was in the boat!"

However, only one thing was clear—Isabelle and Lenoir were alone in the lighthouse and likely to remain there until morning.

In the wildness of his misery, the seignior would have sent every boat on the place out in the fog at midnight to search for his child; but the

uselessness of it was apparent even to him. He ran down to the shore, the count with him, and, jumping into a boat, waited—waited through the ghostly cold hours of the night—for the fog to lift, so he could go in search of his child. At the manoir, madame spent the hours on her knees, praying for Isabelle.

Daylight came, gray and wet, but the white pall still shut out the shore from the river. Suddenly, the great cloud of mist parted, a flood of glory from the rising sun turned the world to gold and silver, and out of the splendor came a boat, pulling toward the shore—a boat with Lenoir and Isabelle in it.

The seignior, full of wrath and anguish, yet had a father's heart in him. He waded out into the water up to his knees, picked Isabelle up in his arms, and carried her ashore bodily, covering her face with kisses, meanwhile calling out to Lenoir, in a menacing voice:

"Oh, viper that you are! you would have stolen my child, my one lamb! But vengeance is at hand for you!"

Lenoir, after pulling the boat ashore and carefully fastening it, stepped upon the dock. Crowds were running toward the group on the shore, and madame, in her sedan-chair, was being brought quickly down the hillside, the bearers running, and Mademoiselle Cornélie and all the women at the manoir fluttering after them. The seignior had put his daughter on the ground by that time, and had begun to pour, as was his wont, a volley of imprecations on Lenoir. The Count Valmeny was pointing with his finger, and shouting:

"Behold a forger, a thief, a fugitive from justice!"

"Wait," said Lenoir, quietly; "younder is madame; let her be present when I tell how I cared for her daughter."

Madame was even then getting out of the sedan-chair, and Isabelle was already in her mother's arms, weeping and smiling. A silence fell—all wished to hear what Lenoir had to say.

"Mademoiselle," said he to Isabelle, taking off his hat, so that his handsome, dark head, sprinkled with gray, could be seen, "have you any complaint to make of the manner in which you were treated while in my company since yesterday afternoon?"

"Not the slightest," replied Isabelle, in a clear voice. "I was not at all alarmed, when I found myself alone in Monsieur Lenoir's care, except for the anxiety I knew my parents would suffer. I knew him to be a gentleman."

"And a forger!" added Count Valmeny.

Madame uttered a little cry, and the seignior, with a threatening gesture, advanced toward Lenoir, who did not move an inch. He took, however, from his bosom a little flat bag, and out of it produced a letter, written in a curious, cramped hand.

"This," he said, "was written by the king himself—not by one of his secretaries; and it has the king's own private seal. Will the Sieur de Montigny follow me while I read?"

The seignior read over Lenoir's shoulder:

VICOMTE DE ROUCOURT: I know the facts concerning the note for a thousand livres made in your father's name. It was a great folly—but the circumstances and your youth and inexperience excuse it. You have a full pardon. The part played by the Count Valmeny was most dishonorable, and I have forbidden him my presence.

LOUIS.

Then Lenoir also took out of the bag a parchment with seals. But the seignior was not looking at it; he was looking at Lenoir and the Count Valmeny. Lenoir had quite lost the calmly contemptuous glance with which he had first surveyed his enemy, and his black eyes were sultry with rage. Valmeny had grown suddenly ugly and beastlike, as men do under the influence of the baser passions. They glared at each other, as men do who wish an excuse to be at each other's throats. Then Lenoir, recovering his cool-

ness, said, in a tone of gentlemanlike banter:

"I am afraid, Valmeny, that you have made a fool of yourself. Since you have, no doubt, published my identity in Quebec, I shall claim the forty thousand livres my father has offered me. He owes me many times more out of my mother's fortune."

"Monsieur," said the seignior to the count, "will it please you to have your horses ordered?"

"Perfectly," replied the count, and strode off, his followers behind him. When he was out of sight, climbing the hillside toward the stables, Lenoir spoke:

"Seignior," said he, "I will not trespass upon you. It is better that I should go—but I ask to tell my story." And he told it in a few simple words.

When he finished, madame was weeping, and so was Isabelle. The seignior shuffled his feet, uneasily; he was sorry for Lenoir and believed in him, but was glad he was going. It would have been awkward if he had remained, and the seignior's opinion of Lenoir's judgment was increased by his quietly leaving—which he did within an hour.

But he had respectful and even kind farewells; and one person—Isabelle—shed some tears, to the amazement of her parents and all who saw her. And, strange to say, she made no effort to conceal her weeping, even from Lenoir, who carried away with him a heart that had suddenly become twenty years younger.

About three months after Lenoir's departure, the first news of him came

to the Manoir de Montigny, in the shape of a letter to the seignior, asking for Isabelle's hand. The letter was signed Edmond de Roucourt. In it, he said his father was dead, and gave other particulars concerning himself—such as coming into a considerable fortune. The only mention he made of Isabelle's dowry was that it was of no consequence to him, and, if the seignior would entertain the proposal, everything would be arranged to his satisfaction.

The seignior sought madame in her saloon, and handed her the letter. She read it, and laid it down, saying:

"He is too old for her. He is thirty-five, at least."

"He has crows' feet around his eyes, and is as lean as my hand," said the seignior.

"Our daughter has had better opportunities."

"Far better. His fortune is nothing to what we can give our child."

Just then, Isabelle came into the saloon, and, being wont to take liberties with her father, picked up the letter and read it, her parents watching her.

A beautiful smile broke over her face as she read. Then she said, with sparkling eyes, to the seignior:

"If you will let me marry the Vicomte de Roucourt, I shall be the happiest creature in the world."

She had never been denied anything she seriously asked of the seignior, and it was then too late to begin. So with the Spring came Lenoir, and the wedding bells rang out for him and Isabelle.



HE WANTED TO KNOW

HE—Let me kiss you.

SHE—I couldn't think of it. Mother is in the next room.

"Well, you don't require a witness, do you?"

HANGING THE HOLLY

WITH Polly I chanced to be hanging the holly,
 With Polly, the roguish, with Polly, the sly,
 With Polly, who's brimming with frolic and folly,
 A quip on her lip and a jest in her eye.

The wind, it was grieving, and shadows were weaving
 Their dark web without o'er the face of the sky;
 Within it was merry with green leaf and berry,
 And Polly, close by, with a gleam in her eye.

"This holly, I know, sir, you wish mistletoe, sir!"
 Cried Polly, as o'er us a wreath we hung high;
 I looked at her, laughing, to see were she chaffing,
 And oh, what a glint there shone out from her eye!

How like the rose-petals on which the bee settles
 Her cheeks were! Her lips were the holly fruit's dye;
 "Be it mistletoe, dear, a minute or so, dear!"
 "A minute!" breathed Polly, with mirth in her eye.

So it's oh, to be hanging the holly with Polly!
 With Polly, the mischievous, Polly, the sly,
 With Polly, the genius of all that is jolly—
 A lure on her lip, and with love in her eye!

CLINTON SCOLLARD.



TRUSTED

PHYSICIAN—I can't diagnose your wife's case at all. She seems to have a
 sprained neck, lumbago in the back, rheumatic knees and gout in both feet.
 WAGGLES—I know what it is. She was reading in the cozy corner and hap-
 pened to fall asleep.



OH, there used to be a lady in Quebec,
 Who'd a wonderfully statues-que neck;
 All the dances she attended,
 Till a cold her folly ended,
 And her larynx was a pictures-que wreck.

CLARET AND CREAM

By Edgar Saltus

THE British Academy of Letters has, we learn, become a fact. We learn, also, that its object is uncertain. To others, perhaps; yet not to us. In the cannibal South Seas old people are knocked on the head. That is quite as it should be. Old people are tenacious of their ideas. In killing them off progress is facilitated. England is eminently conservative. Instead of filling cemeteries with the decrepit, she furnishes an Academy for them. So are the just rewarded; so, too, is conservatism maintained.

In the circumstances there is no good and valid reason why we should not have an Academy in the States—but on different lines; for that matter, on lines so ample that the clothes-line would not be omitted from them.

What we require are not the *arrière-pensées* of age but the frank enthusiasms of beauty. It is only from the young that one really learns, and one learns best from those who are gracious. Highways are trodden and sterile. It is in the pampas, the savannahs, the forest primeval, in lands that are virgin and minds fresh as they, that Nature gives utterance to her thoughts.

We cannot listen to her too often. She has always something new to say, or, if not new, then something so old that it seems quite novel. But it is only to the young that she says it. In default of her, let us listen to them, and, with that object, form an Academy of those who have done nothing.

There are plenty of them. From the tons of manuscript—unsolicited and with stamps inclosed—which we

see daily dumped on editorial desks, we think it safe to assume that out of the wilderness light shall come. In any event, it is clear that there are enough amateurs in our midst to stock Academies by the cityful.

They have indeed done nothing yet. But therein is their charm. An Academy composed of young people who have done nothing yet would be more alluring than one made up of fossils who are unable to do anything more.

Such an Academy would be ideal and its establishment easy. Any one of the multitudinous millionairesses whom we behold floating about could usher it into being with but the wave of a cheque. Then, quite like Sappho, at Mitylene, she could beckon about her clusters of fair young women, who, from kissable lips, would instruct the world in the arts of love and life.

What more could the heart desire? Those kissable lips would tell us what we have long since learned to forget—that we all make a great fuss over things which are not worth bothering about; that constancy, for instance, which we always exact and never accord, is the result of nothing more than an absence of imagination. That would be very good for the first lesson; for there is nothing so tiresome as a woman without imagination, except a woman who has too much.

Those kissable lips, in dilating on the subject, would cite apposite examples, among others, a recent case perhaps, in which a pistol shot, fired in the dead of night, reverberated through the small-talk of the land. The echoes, subsiding, dwindled, it is true, into the nothing from which they

had sprung. But, assuming that a shot there had been, what an endearing homily could be drawn on the tastefulness and tactfulness of those who, for bagatelles such as this, do their worst to raise the roof. "*Il fait beau aujourd'hui*," a French caricaturist made one English lord say to another, "*allons tuer quelque chose*." There are people who are just as eager the moment the domestic sky is obscured.

A fine rebuke they would get from fair women, and fine applause, too, would be bestowed on the gentleman who, discovered behind the curtains of a boudoir and being noisily asked by the proprietor what he was doing there, answered, with an assurance entirely Apollonian, "I am taking a walk."

In this way we should acquire instruction, not merely in manners, but in repartee. As a people we need it. As a people we are, of course, delightful; but we are neither witty nor well bred. By way of compensation we are highly moral, or think ourselves so, which amounts to quite the same thing. Our novels are padded with purity and scenery, and our newspapers with hypocrisy and cant. Were proof of our morality required, there it is. But through some defect of the climate—unless it be of the schools—we lack the higher morality which was inculcated by Epicurus, by Epictetus, by one of the Popes, Boniface VIII., which consists in accepting with gaiety and indulgence such accidents as we cannot avoid. But not a bit of it. We make the mistake of taking ourselves seriously when there is nothing earthly worth taking seriously at all—except, indeed, the quality of the champagne which we drink and the giving and the acceptance of invitations to dine.

Apropos whereto those fair women would have a word or two for the metropolitan hostess. They would tell her that, of all forms of iniquity, dining is the most barbarous. In primitive days people fed in common through fear of being attacked. As often as not the fear was justified. Nowadays

people feed in common through the more dreadful fear of being bored, and succeed very perfectly in becoming so. "*Venez, messieurs*," said a numbered Louis of France, "*allons nous ennuyer ensemble*." That is the way modern invitations read. Yet, since such things must be, those who love righteousness without abhorring Mammon should throw out the sweets. In this sanitary age flattery is the only variety that can be hygienically assimilated. Of that the least among us can never have enough.

In discussing our modes, caprices, passions and disillusionments—which is about all we can call our very own, except, indeed, our further charm—the fact, as Goethe noted, that we are all of us capable of crime—though it be but that of bad taste, which is assuredly the worst of all—in discussing these things those fair women would pass from grave to gay and display for us the bewilderingments and witcheries of life as it is.

They would show us that it is a continuous catastrophe. They would show us that, whether it be that of an individual or of a nation, life is but a diffusion of stupidity and vulgarity. The showing would not be cheerful, but it would have the merit of being exact.

They would not stop there, either. From the premises advanced it would be logical and agreeable to assume that life on earth is a sort of leprosy, the result, perhaps, of a morbid secretion from which healthy planets are immune.

And, after all, why not? Sir Robert Ball, not long since, informed us that, within the relatively narrow sphere to which observation is confined, there are not less than three hundred million worlds. Beyond the uttermost of these worlds there are other planets, other systems, other suns. Wherever imagination, in its weariness, would set a limit, there is space begun.

In view of which, and of more, too, it becomes humorous to suppose that the vulgarity and stupidity on exhibition here are indefinitely repeated

throughout space. On the moon, life there may be. The moon was once part of the earth. It may, in consequence, have been infected with the original complaint. It is possible, also, that, through atmospheric and aqueous affinities, Mars has been exposed to the same disease. From Venus and Mercury science has discovered that such affinities have been withheld. But of the other worlds and systems we know so little that it is idle to attempt to know less.

Yet, though one and all of these worlds move in a mystery which is due to our ignorance, we may pierce it with the hope that they have been preserved from the bewilderments and witcheries of which life on this planet is the cause.

In displaying these things the cluster of fair young women would indicate the forethought of Providence, which has provided us with ample compensations. For there are compensations. There are two of them—and two is a good many.

The first is evil. We do not appreciate evil at its worth. It is the handicraft of Satan. We do not appreciate him as we should. He is a great artificer. He is more; he is a great artist. It was he who created this compensation, which is a jewel, a luxury and a necessity in one. And naturally. Evil is the counterpart of excellence. Both have their roots in nature. One could not be destroyed without the other. For every shape of evil there is a corresponding form of good. Virtue would be meaningless were it not for vice. Beauty would have no charm were it not for ugliness. Genius would have no message were it not for bores.

Evil is therefore a jewel, and highly salutary at that. Were it eliminated from the scheme of things, life would have no savor, and joy no delight. Existence would provide the monotony of silence. Happiness and unhappiness would be synonymous states.

The other jewel which Providence has set in our tiara is superstition. What would we do without that? A superstition is a hope. Besides, is it not nicer to be wrong in a given belief

than not to have it at all? Of course it is. We believe what we wish, never what we should.

It is fortunate that we can. Were it otherwise the vitriol which Science has thrown at Faith would have set Society mad. But not a bit of it. Society turned its back. The attitude is commendable; for it is on superstition that we all subsist—superstition by day, dreams at night.

Superstition covers a multitude of stupidities. But it is ductile and plastic. It lends itself to combinations which are as marvelous as they are enchanting. We are indebted to it for the masterpieces of art, for the splendor of cathedrals, for the seductions of song, for real literature and good verse. We owe to it everything, even to the amenities of life. Superstition is the essential ingredient of everything that is charming. It is the basis of ethics and the foundation of beauty. It has decorated life and robbed death of its grotesqueness. It is, therefore, in accordance with the order of things and the necessities of man.

Truth, on the other hand, is vicious. We may sigh for it, but it is best that we should sigh in vain. Truth is hard. It is rigid. It is not ductile nor is it plastic. It does not yield. It is vicious, and, being vicious, it bites. Get in its way, and, unless you have had the forethought to antisepticize yourself with indifference, it will cause a hydrophobia for which the only Pasteur Institute is time.

Superstition is just the reverse. It is amiable and consolatory. It is indeed a jewel. We should hold fast to it. We should hold fast to that which is good and not try to prove anything.

From maxims of this fastidious morality, deductions follow. It will be seen that life is not all that fancy might paint it. It will be suspected that its compensations are not as compensatory as they look. From these premises it will be argued that there must be an error somewhere, a big mistake, a stitch dropped from the original scheme of things, a blunder, ex-

tending back, perhaps, to the parturations of the primal protoplasm.

Such argument is entirely valid. We esteem ourselves at a value which we do not possess; for no reason other than innate conceit, we fancy ourselves advanced. That fancy is so comforting that with it we have developed an idolatry of the most amusing kind. We have developed the worship of self. The unction of that worship is so thick that through it we fail to see how stupid we look. We fail to see that the most gracious and indulgent sentiment which we can have for ourselves is not esteem, but contempt. We have not advanced; we have deviated. It is not from apes that we should have descended, though better, perhaps, apes than reptiles; yet, had evolution had us really in its charge, instead of being superior animals we should be human butterflies, subsisting on dew and desire, with youth, winged and beautiful, for the crown and conclusion of life.

A life such as that, untroubled by dentists, unburdened by tailors, untrammelled by bills, unencumbered by bores, a life free, volatile and quasi-divine, a life passed among flowers and suave perfumes, a life of sheer poetry which, but for some archaic error, might have been ours—a life such as that, however fantastic, would, to say

the least, be more agreeable than one such as this, in which we do little of more importance than assist with the passivity which good breeding requires at the loss of our illusions, our umbrellas and our hair.

Et voilà, et cetera and so forth.

It is cups of claret and cream of this order that, in the ideal Academy which we advocate, clusters of fair women would convey, and, in conveying, uplift.

For women, particularly when pretty, are the natural instructors of man. Their intuitions are more valuable than the certainties of mathematics, their insight surer than the demonstrations which logic provides. They are abundantly lacking in sense, it is true. But when has reason governed the world? It is by the heart-strings alone that men can be pulled, and it is only women that can do it. In addition, they have the immense advantage of being all alike, in that they are, every one of them, different. And a cluster of them delivering the messages of Nature, to whom, through that weakness which is their strength, they are nearer than man, would constitute not merely an ideal Academy, but give the world fresh conceptions of beauty and therewith a taste, as yet uncultivated, for claret and cream.



WITHIN the cannery all day
The Brown twins sit on chairs;
And many men do stroll that way
To watch that pair pare pears.



SO HE GETS AROUND

ETHEL—Gracious, Mabel, why do you lace so awfully whenever Cholly Lovsik comes around?

MABEL—Oh, the poor fellow's arm is so short!

THE LAY OF THE LOBSTER

By Albert Lee

THE lobster is a kind of bird,
Concerning which you may have heard.
He dwells beneath the sea;
He has a tail, but has no wings;
I don't think that he ever sings,
But crawls most gracefully.

Now, once a lobster, young and green,
Who'd never seen a soup tureen,
Came scrambling through the surf;
A maiden, who was standing there,
Picked up that foolish young lobster,
And took him on the turf.

The maiden to the lobster said,
"I'll take you out and paint you red,
I'll give you a hot time!"
The lobster thought this would be great,
And did not realize till late
His ignorance sublime.

The lobster said it would be fine
To have some supper and some wine;
He thought he was a rounder.
The maid, though, knew her little trick;
She got him in hot water quick,
And left him there to flounder.

She ripped the lobster up the back,
And gave his skull a lusty crack,
Then roasted him quite well.
And when she'd got all that there was
To get out of that lobster's claws,
She threw away the shell.

I'm sure that no one well can fail
To grasp the moral of this tale—
It's very plain to see.
A lobster is a lobster now,
He is a lobster anyhow,
And will forever be.

FROM THE BOOK OF LOVE

THE breath of God broods o'er us where we lie
 Beneath the star-sown garment of the sky
 Whispering life's secret in our willing ears—
 Oh, listen, love, before the breath goes by!

My raptured soul is drunken with your love;
 The strange, narcotic sweetness of your love
 Lulls me and drops me in a veil of dream—
 Draws me and drops me in the deep of love.

There is a sweeter sound than seraph hears;
 The mystic rhythm of the pulsing years
 Holds less of lure and wonder to the soul—
 The music of your heart-beats to my ears!

Why do I worship you? I cannot tell.
 What lures the wild bee to the asphodel?
 Why does the fond moon draw the sighing sea?
 Perhaps the lovelorn nightingale can tell.

How swift the merry sand runs in the glass!
 The midnight daughters steal along the grass,
 Peering in silence through their purple hair.
 Draw near, love, for this golden hour will pass!

I am the sun to warm you with my heat,
 I am the dream to make your slumber sweet,
 I am the moon to watch you all the night,
 I am the sandals underneath your feet!

ELSA BARKER.



AS NEAR AS HE COULD COME TO IT

WILLIE—Pa, what is a goody-goody?
 FATHER—As a rule, my boy, it is a person who is no good.



WHAT CAUSED THE DELAY

LENA—Why doesn't Jack Fairlygood marry Belle?
 ETHEL—I'm not quite sure that I am going to get Charlie Bonds.

A LITERARY AGENT

By Owen Oliver

IT was exactly three weeks before Christmas. I was thinking, with my chin on my hands, when Jane came into the dining-room. I am Molly Marchant, daughter of the famous author. He is not so famous as he ought to be. I have kept house since I was quite young. Now I am thirteen. Jane is our general. She is very much like other generals. She does everything wrong and makes me cross; but she means well.

"Wot yer worritin' about, miss?" she asked.

"I'm not worrying," I said; "I'm considering."

She shook her head. "About them 'ere Christmas presents?"

I nodded. "I meant to get a stationery case for father, and a pistol with a spring for Bob, and a box of mounted infantry for Tommy."

"So yer told me." I had discussed the matter with Jane to make it clear to myself. I did not wish her advice, of course; but I had to talk to some one. "They'd be a sov'rin, yer said, an' yer was goin' ter save it out of the 'ousekeepin'."

"I can't save it out of the house-keeping now," I stated, mournfully. She put the corner of her apron in her mouth, and bit it. That is her way of thinking. Judging by results, it is not a good way.

"W'y can't yer?"

"I had to make up the gas money."

She grunted, understandingly. We always have a little difficulty about the gas and water and rates.

"Father's stories haven't been selling so well lately."

"'E orter put in more lords an' la-

dies an' murders," Jane pronounced. "It's 'igh life wot people want nowa-days."

"You don't know anything about it, Jane," I said, severely, "and your tastes are low." If people had better taste, father's stories would sell better. He has often told me so.

"I know wot I like, an' so does other people," she persisted. Jane is stubborn, and thinks she knows things when she doesn't. She represents the public, father says, when editors make him angry. Editors are very trying. They accept other people's things that aren't nearly so good as his.

"If you know so much," I suggested, "perhaps you can tell me how to get the sovereign."

She pulled at her apron, till I was afraid she would draw some teeth. "There was four an' tuppence of yer own, a fortnight since," she observed; "wot's become of it? Gas, too?"

"Two shillings of it," I admitted. I told father it belonged to the house-keeping, or he wouldn't have taken it.

"An' the rest?"

"The boys," I said, apologetically. "They aren't very old, and they beg so hard for pennies, poor little fellows!"

"More fool you!"

"If you cannot address me properly, Jane," I said, with dignity, "you can go down-stairs. For goodness' sake, leave your apron alone!"

She pulled it out, with a jerk. "I was thinkin' I could do with five shillin's less this month," she said, turning redder. She is naturally red.

"Nonsense!" I cried, in horror. "The idea!" She looked hurt, so I hastened to soothe her. As I have

said, she means well. "It wouldn't be right, Jane, and I couldn't; but it is so good of you to want to do it for them."

"Tain't for them—it's for you." Jane likes me. I don't know why. "Yer'd go without nothink yerself for them boys—the greedy little wretches!"

"Jane! How dare you!" They are the dearest little boys in the world; only, Jane is so stupid and doesn't understand how to manage them.

"They don't think of nothink but their own selves," she grumbled.

"How can you expect them to think, at their age?" Bob is eight, and Tommy six.

"Come to that, you ain't no hage yerself." I froze. "Though yer manage wonderful, as I was sayin' to Mrs. Green, w'en she come for the washin' this very mornin', and——"

I thawed. "That reminds me," I interrupted. "I wanted to consult you about the washing." You can do what you like with Jane, if you pretend to take her advice. "Do you think we could do the ironing at home? It would save eighteen pence a week."

She pursed her lips. "We'd do 'em," she pronounced; "but whether the master 'ud wear 'em afterward—that's the questi'n. Never no ironer, I wasn't."

"I won't tell him about it," I suggested; "then he won't notice, perhaps."

Jane shook her head. "'E's got 'is proper senses," she said, "though 'e do write potery."

"But we'll try, won't we, Jane?"

She grinned. "Yer know 'ow to git over a body, miss," she said.

So we starched and ironed father's things; and, on Saturday, I put them carefully away in the wardrobe. On Sunday morning, I heard him stamping around the room and talking to himself. I fancied he was working out a plot, with a disinherited son or a villain in it. Then his door opened suddenly.

"Molly!" he shouted. "Molly! You must change this confounded

washerwoman. The collars are rags—perfect rags; as for the shirts—she's starched nothing but the tails."

"I—I'm sorry, dad," I said. "I—I didn't think—that it—I'll change her." I didn't mean my voice to be choky, but it was. He noticed it directly, and ran down-stairs and put his arm around me. He is the nicest father that could be.

"You little brick!" he said. "It was only my fussiness, really. They aren't half bad; and the stiffness will soon wear out of them!"

But I could see that they wouldn't do; so I decided to try some other way of saving the sovereign.

People talk about saving money as if it were easy, but it isn't. Jane said the proper way was to look in the papers—especially the religious ones—for something. So I searched in the *Evangelical Trumpeter*, till I found this:

How I make 35s. a week in spare time. Persons of all ages and sexes can do it. Full particulars on receipt of 13d. in stamps.

Of course, I know that people who write advertisements sometimes exaggerate a little. Still, I thought, if it was only a pound a week it would do very well. So I sent the stamps, with a letter explaining matters. The next day but one I had this answer:

DEAR MISS:

I make my 35s. a week out of foolish people who answer my advertisement. I cannot recommend the plan to you, so I return your stamps. If you are a sensible little girl, you will not waste money in answering advertisements.

Yours truly,

MAKIN & Co.

P. S.—Your best way to get a sovereign is to cash the inclosed.

The inclosed was a postal order for twenty shillings.

Jane bit her apron less fiercely than usual, when I showed her the answer.

"'E's a sharp 'un!" she said, admiringly. "An' a bit sorfit too, or 'e'd never 'ave sent yer back the stamps."

"I think he's rather good," I said. "I wish—" I looked at the postal order, and sighed. If only there had been an excuse for keeping it!

"It'll buy yer presents fer yer," said Jane. That decided me. I know that what Jane proposes is almost certain to be wrong.

"It won't do anything of the sort," I said, decidedly. "I shall send it back this morning." I did not want to have time to change my mind; so I sat down, and wrote at once:

DEAR MR. MAKIN & CO.:

I think it is very kind of you to send back my stamps and the postal order especially. But I think it belongs to other people, and some of them want it more than I do. So I am sorry to return it, if you don't mind.

Yours truly,

MOLLY MARCHANT.

P. S.—It was very kind of you, and I hope you won't do it any more, because it isn't right.

P. S. 2.—I hope this will find you well as it leaves me.

P. S. 3.—It really was very kind of you.

I ran to the pillar-box, and posted it. Then I began studying the advertisements that did not ask for stamps. There could be no harm, I thought, in answering them. This seemed the best:

Young gentleman would like to share his fortune with a young lady. She must be attractive and quite young. Reply in confidence, stating income, etc., to X, 2789, care of this paper.

I wasn't sure that I was attractive, but I thought I must be young enough; and, as I had not any income, he would easily see that I was the right sort of person to share with. So, I wrote, saying that, if he was really determined to give away part of his fortune, I was willing to take some of it. I explained that I did not wish more than £1, as that would just buy the presents. Also, I promised that I would pay it back, if he ever became poor, and I was rich. After several days, an answer came.

DEAR MISS MOLLY:

If you took my fortune you would have to take me with it. This would not be a good bargain, for your share would not amount to the modest sovereign that you want. I hope you will get it. I am sure you are a good little girl.

Yours very truly,

X, 2789.

I could not understand why he offered to share his fortune, if he hadn't any to share; but, perhaps, he only wanted some one rich to marry him. Anyhow, I thought that it was no use answering advertisements any more.

I tried to save all I could, but could not save enough. The week before Christmas the amount was 2s. 3½d. The next week there were the Christmas things to buy, and father could only spare 10s. extra, which wasn't nearly enough for them. Boys want such a lot of cakes and things. I asked the baker and grocer and butcher if they would mind waiting for their money, but they said that they wouldn't wait. Indeed, they wanted me to pay off some of what was already owing, which was ridiculous. I thought of selling my brooch and bracelets; but father had told me that I must not.

"I don't believe that I shall be able to buy any presents at all," I said, miserably. "The boys will be disappointed." Jane had gone and told them, like the great stupid she is.

"Serve 'em right," she said, viciously. "The tiresome little monkeys, playin' with the water an' makin' sich a mess, an' runnin' up the clean steps w'en I jest done 'em, an'——"

"Boys always do those things," I told her.

"An' git smacked, if they 'as their dues. If I was you, I'd——"

"No, you wouldn't," I said; "if you'd promised your mother to be good to them, when she—she—" I had to turn away to the window. I never can bear to think about *that*.

Jane did not answer, for once. She was very good all the afternoon, and made the boys some rock cakes, of her own accord.

"I was thinkin'," she said, when they had gone to bed, "as wot you want is advice."

"There's no one to advise me," I said. I couldn't well ask father about his own present, you see.

"There's them hanswers to correspondents," said Jane, "like the *Home*

Jewel, wot calls 'erself 'Aunt Anne,' as tells yer orl about heverythink."

"Yes," I said; "I suppose she would know; though the pudding I made from her recipe wasn't very good. But, perhaps, that was because I left out all the things that were too expensive."

"She'll tell yer 'ow to make a sov'rin' easy," said Jane, confidently. "There isn't time to get an answer before Christmas."

"W'y don't yer call an' see 'er? She's always writin' as 'ow she'd like to meet 'er 'dear young fren's.'"

"I'm half a mind to go this afternoon," I said. I went.

The offices were in a dirty back street in the City, up four flights of stairs. I knocked at the door for five minutes, and nobody answered. So I looked in. The outer room was small and untidy. The only furniture was a deal table and two office stools. A red-haired boy was sitting on one of them, trying to balance a ruler on his chin. I knew that he must be either very deaf or very rude. So I didn't know what to say.

"What do you want?" he asked, when the ruler fell.

"I want to see Aunt Anne."

"Never had one," he replied, picking up the ruler.

"She writes for your paper."

"Never heard of her."

"But I know she does."

"If you know, it's no use my arguing." He made another attempt to balance the ruler, and ignored me. This made me angry. I should have liked to knock the ruler off his chin, but I thought that it would not be quite ladylike to do so.

"Perhaps you will be so good as to tell the editor that I want to see her," I said, severely. He burst into a roar of laughter. "You are a very rude boy. I shall write and tell her about you."

He laughed all the more. "Oh, Lor'!" he cried; "you'll be the death of me!"

"I don't see anything to laugh at," I said.

He restrained another roar, and laid down the ruler on the table. "The old lady is very retiring," he said, struggling with a grin. "She won't let any one see her. Straight."

"I've come up to London on purpose," I protested. "It's very important." He shook his head. "Do ask her, *please*."

He stared hard at me. He did not seem a bad-natured boy. "I can't," he said, seriously. "It's as much as my place is worth." I felt the tears coming into my eyes. I think he guessed that I was disappointed.

"Look here, miss," he said, quite kindly; "can you tell me what it's about? Perhaps I could get her to send you a message." He dusted the other stool for me, and I sat down. I could see he was not really a bad sort of boy. So I told him all about it. When I had finished, he balanced the ruler on his hand.

"Never had a sister myself," he said, thoughtfully. I did not see what this had to do with the question. "If I ask him—I mean Aunt Anne—he—that is she—will only say 'no.'"

"You might ask her," I entreated.

He balanced the ruler again, while he considered. "Tell you what," he said, "I'll just show you in. Then he—I mean Aunt Anne—will have to see you. You might get over—er—her." He looked at me, critically. "You're that sort."

"You *are* kind," I said, gratefully.

He blushed. "Come along," he said. "It's Aunt Anne in here." He opened a door, and pushed me in.

"Young lady to see Aunt Anne," he said, and banged the door behind me.

I could not see anybody, at first, the room was so full of smoke—which struck me as very strange. Then I heard a deep voice say, "Confound the boy!" Which seemed stranger. Then I discovered a small, elderly gentleman, sitting at a table covered with proofs and papers, smoking a very large pipe, as small gentlemen generally do.

"I—I beg your pardon," I said; "I wanted to see Aunt Anne."

"Ah!" said the gentleman. "Um—er—yes. Won't you sit down?" He cleared some books off a chair, and I sat down. "Perhaps you will tell me what you want, and I will speak to her. I am the editor."

"Oh!" I drew my chair away, in horror.

He smiled. "I am a very harmless one," he assured me. "Don't you like editors?"

"No-o," I said; "not generally." He looked grieved. "You see," I explained, "they don't treat father properly."

"What a shame!" he said. "Your father is——?"

"William Marchant—the great novelist," I said, proudly.

"Ah, yes! He has written several stories for us. Very nice stories—very nice indeed."

"Then," I said, "why don't you pay him more for them?"

He laughed. "Are you his literary agent?"

"Oh, no!" I said. Then he asked me some questions, and, at last, I told him what I wanted. He listened very attentively, playing with a paper-knife.

"I am sure Aunt Anne would like to help you," he said; "but I am afraid she can't. You see, money is very hard to make nowadays—even on a paper." He sighed. I noticed that his clothes weren't much newer than father's. "Aunt Anne gets paid after contributors like your father; and, if there isn't enough—" He shrugged his shoulders. "I doubt if she has a sovereign to spare."

"I don't want her to *give* it to me!" I said, in horror. He smiled.

"I'm afraid you are rather young to earn money—except from your father."

"Father gives me all he can," I assured him, "he does, really." He bowed in agreement. "But stories don't bring in much, you know; and they don't get paid for very quickly—not so quickly as we buy things. That's the difficulty."

"No," he said, sympathetically, "I know they don't. I wish we could pay

him more, and pay it quicker, my dear; indeed, I do."

"I thought perhaps Aunt Anne could tell me how to earn something."

He shook his head. "I don't see any way. I wish I could—really."

"Don't you think, perhaps, Aunt Anne——?"

"My dear," he said, "to tell you a secret, *I* am Aunt Anne, and every one else on the paper."

"Oh," I cried, "I see!" I suppose they couldn't pay her any more because they were poor. I rose to go, and he opened the door for me, as if I were grown up. Then he suddenly shut it again.

"Wait a minute," he cried, quickly. "Perhaps—would you like to earn ten shillings?"

I laughed. "Of course I should," I said.

"I was thinking—er—I want an illustration for the paper. If I were to sketch you, now——"

"I don't think I'm worth ten shillings," I said, thoughtfully. "I don't think I am nice-looking, really; though people *have* said—but, of course, I didn't believe them."

"I am the best judge of that," he assured me. So I sat down again, and he began doing something on a piece of paper. After about three minutes, he said he had finished, and went to a cupboard, I suppose to get out the money.

It seemed very strange that he had done ten shillings' worth of drawing so quickly, and I rather wanted to see how nice I looked; that is, if I did look nice. So, when his back was turned, I just reached over, and picked up the paper. There was nothing on it but a few lines—not a proper picture at all.

"Oh!" I said. "You shouldn't! You were going to give me the money. You are very kind, but—" I began to cry, and I didn't wish him to see me. So, I ran right out of the room, through the outer place and down the stairs. The red-haired boy ran after me, and caught me on the last flight.

"What's he said to you?" he de-

manded, fiercely. "I'll go and have it out with him."

"No, no!" I cried. "He was very kind, indeed; and so are you. But I must go; please don't stop me." I ran away into the street. When I turned the corner, the red-haired boy was looking at me from the door. He is a nice, kind boy, I am sure.

When I arrived home, I pretended to be very cheerful; but I wasn't. It was Jane's evening out, luckily, so I didn't have to talk to her. After I had put the boys to bed, I sat down in the arm-chair by the fire, and cried. I know it is silly to cry; but sometimes you don't care if things are ever so silly.

I sobbed till I was nearly asleep. Father let himself in with his latch-key, without my hearing him. When he saw that I had been crying, he made a fuss over me. So I told him about the sovereign that I couldn't save. He was very kind. He always is. He made out that I do things ever so well. Of course, I know that I don't; but I like him to think so. Also, he said that he hoped to manage the presents for the boys. He hinted at something for me, but I would not hear of that. I know I must be very expensive to him.

We were still talking, when the postman knocked at the door. I was afraid it was only a "return," but it was not. It was a small letter, like those that bring acceptances and cheques.

We read it together, and I clapped

my hands, when I saw that it was from the editor of the *Highflyer*. Father has often wished that they would take his things, because they pay so well. This is what the letter said:

DEAR MR. MARCHANT:

The editor of the *Home Jewel*, who is an old friend of mine, has shown me the contribution named hereunder, which he thought merited higher remuneration than he could pay. I am pleased to accept it, and inclose a cheque for £10, which, he said, you would accept as satisfactory. He desired me to mention that this amount includes £1 commission to your literary agent, who called upon him this afternoon.

I shall be pleased to consider your work at any time.

Yours truly,

LAWRENCE HEIGH.

Father read the letter three times, and each time he looked more smiling.

"Who the dickens does he mean by my literary agent?" he said. I held him by both sides of his coat, and made him look at me.

"He means—me!" I said.

Then I told him all about it, from beginning to end. He put his arm around me, and kept holding me tighter and tighter. When I had finished, he didn't say anything; he only looked at mother's picture over the mantel-piece. He was quiet for so long that I touched his arm, gently.

"What are you thinking about, daddy?" I asked. "Mother?" He nodded.

"And her little girl," he said, with a catch in his voice, "the best little girl in the world!"



THE REASON

WHY are there still some bachelors left
 To litter the walks of life—
 Trembling and mum,
 Dolefully dumb,
 With never the nerve to wife?
 Why are there still some bachelors left
 To falter and blush and grope?
 It is plain to me,
 And you will agree,
 'Tis to give some old maid hope.

A BIT OF COLOR

(Paris, 1896)

By Arthur Macy

O H, damsel fair at the Porte Maillot,
With the soft blue eyes that haunt me so,
Pray, what should I do
When a girl like you
Bestows her smile, her glance and her sigh
On the first fond fool that is passing by,
Who listens and longs as the sweet words flow
From her pretty, red lips at the Porte Maillot?

There were lips as red ere you were born,
Now wreathed in smiles, now curled in scorn,
And other bright eyes
With their truth and lies,
That broke the heart and turned the brain
Of many a tender, lovelorn swain;
But never, I ween, brought half the woe
That comes from the lips at the Porte Maillot.

A charming picture, there you stand,
A perfect work from a master's hand!
With your face so fair
And your wondrous hair,
Your glorious color, your light and shade,
And your classic head that the gods have made,
Your cheeks with crimson all aglow,
As you wait for a lover at the Porte Maillot.

There are gorgeous tints in the jeweled crown,
There are brilliant shades when the sun goes down;
But your lips vie
With the western sky,
And give to the world so rare a hue
That the painter must learn his art anew,
And the sunset borrow a brighter glow
From the lips of the girl at the Porte Maillot.

Come, tell me truly, fair-haired youth,
Do her eyes flash love, her lips speak truth?
Or does she beguile
With her glance and smile,
And burn you, spurn you all day long,
With a Circe's art and a siren's song?
Ah, would that your foolish heart might know
The lie in the heart at the Porte Maillot!

SWEET SORROW

"DO you know," she said, with a little laugh, "I almost hate to see you go."
 "Do you really?" He spoke gratefully. "But you'll soon forget me, when once I'm gone."

"Yes," she assented, "I suppose that's so."

His face fell a trifle. "Oh, come now, that's rather rough on a fellow."

"I don't see why. I never would have been so impolite as to say it, myself, but, since you've said it, what earthly use is there in denying it, simply because it's unpleasant to hear it stated plainly?"

"Do you want to make me unhappy?"

"Why, no."

"Then don't forget me."

"There are so many people to remember," she murmured, apologetically.

"Oh, if you find it such a task, by all means forget me," he said, savagely.

"Yes?" interrogatively.

Suddenly his mood changed, and he laughed. "Do you know, you are the dearest, most exasperating girl in the world, and what I am going to do without you I can't imagine."

"Yes," she said, demurely, "it will be hard for you, I suppose; but the world is full of girls."

"Not for me," emphatically. "What will you do all the mornings and afternoons, when I am gone? Won't you please be just a little lonely?"

"Probably, at first; but, as you say, it won't last long. Some other man will come along, you know, who will help me kill time. We've had a jolly time these long days, and become very good friends," she concluded, meditatively; "and yet, we really know amazingly little about each other."

"Yes," said he, with a smile, watching her slyly; "you don't even know that I'm not a married man."

"Oh," she replied, coolly, "I supposed that you were, of course; you are such a happy, contented-looking man. I always assume that men of that type are married; it saves so many complications."

"Then you've not believed a word I've said to you?"

"Certainly not; it would have spoiled it all, if I had thought you in earnest."

"But I was," he said, gravely, rising and holding out his hand. "Good-bye, Miss Lacy."

"Good-bye," she said, with a bored air.

He walked slowly to the door. She looked steadily out of the window. He opened the door. A soft little voice behind him said, plaintively:

"Are you, sure enough, married, Mr. Damon?"

And it all began again.

ANNA M. WALKER.



WHEW!

BIGGE—Yes! The Amazons were a warlike race of women. But what made you think of them?

BAGGE—I was just trying to imagine an Amazon bargain-sale.

THE IMMACULATE ONE

By Felix Noël

“I POSSESS an organization,” said the Immaculate One, “that really causes me immense suffering.”

“How sad!” murmured the young-old lady with a choice assortment of specimens of the animal and vegetable kingdoms on her hat. She was watching the door for a certain Man, and felt not the most microscopic interest in the Immaculate One and his woes.

“Yes,” continued he, plaintively; “take music, for instance—such a delight to the world at large, it is often a source of the very greatest anguish to me.”

He paused, but the lady’s eyes and mind were on the door. She became sensible of the pause at last, and said, sweetly, “Y-e-e-s?”

The Immaculate One was aggrieved. His audiences—generally consisting of one, for he did not shine when addressing a number—were, as a rule, more attentive. He sighed, and at that instant the Man arrived.

“You were saying?” said his companion, interrogatively.

“That I frequently suffer excessively from the very things that give less finely strung natures the greatest pleasure.”

“Well, certainly,” said the lady, “one can suffer a great deal from bad music. I have experienced such suffering myself, though I am not a very musical person.”

“Oh, it is not music only,” continued the Immaculate One; “imperfection of any kind causes me suffering. I have, before now, passed sleepless nights and miserable days, after merely seeing a picture that did injustice to

one of my ideal subjects. Fact, I assure you.”

“You paint, do you not?” asked his companion.

“Very little, v-e-r-y little,” answered the Immaculate One. He would have died rather than own that he hardly knew one end of the brush from the other. “I love the Great Mother too well to malign her by my puny efforts to portray her charms.”

His companion looked mystified. “You mean—?” she said.

“I mean the Great Mother, Nature,” replied he, a little impatiently; then to himself, “Good heavens! of whom did she imagine I was speaking?”

Somebody struck a few notes on the piano. The Immaculate One put on the expression of a martyr ready to be led out to the lions, and the Engaged Girl—engaged to Him—looked sweet sympathy in his direction.

“Won’t you sing us something?” It was the Son of the House, to the Engaged Girl.

Her eyes sought the face of the Immaculate One, which became even more expressive of heavenly resignation, and she replied, hurriedly: “Oh, no; please do not ask me, Jack; I really do not sing well enough to inflict my performances on people in general.”

“Rubbish!” said Jack Compton, savagely. He had loved her since her pinafore days, and he did not love the Immaculate One. “You always used to sing for us, Muriel.”

“Oh, that was in the days before I knew any better,” she said, gaily, though she would have liked dearly

to please her old playmate, and she loved singing as a bird does.

Jack turned away with a little anger in his eye, and Muriel's sister, Edith, looked after him with a bitter pang in her heart, and over her fair face there swept a flush of resentment against the Immaculate One. For, as usual, it was a game of cross-purposes, and Edith loved Jack, and Jack had eyes for no one but Muriel, and Muriel loved the Immaculate One, and the Immaculate One loved—so his enemies said—himself.

"You will play something for us, won't you?" said Jack, in his most persuasive tones, appearing ten minutes later at the elbow of the lady with the hat, whose performances, as was universally acknowledged, were calculated to strike terror into the soul of an organ-grinder.

That virgin, who was by this time reduced to the last stage of boredom, rose with alacrity, saying:

"Oh, with pleasure, Mr. Compton! But you will accompany me on your delightful banjo?"

"Of course," said Jack, promptly. He played that instrument execrably, and knew it, and the two twanged and strummed and sang about "darkies" and "coons" and "pickaninnies." The Immaculate One had a nervous headache. That mysterious malady invariably attacked him when he was not the centre of attraction. Jack Compton rejoiced unspeakably and wished it worse.

They were married. It was a quiet wedding, very; there was no bridesmaid but Edith, who had cried till her nose resembled the color of a tomato, and was consequently not ornamental, while her disgust with the whole affair interfered with her usefulness. Muriel would have liked the customary pretty fuss, with white satin and orange blossoms and girl friends about her; but the Immaculate One shuddered at the first intimation of such a thing.

"Do not, my dearest," he said, in his most impressive manner, "bring in

the vulgar herd to share in the most sacred moment of our lives." So the vulgar herd, as represented by Muriel's nearest friends and relatives, stayed away; and the Immaculate One bought himself a diamond pin with the money that would otherwise have gone in bouquets and bracelets, and gave Edith what he called "a simple souvenir," in the shape of a silver brooch, value three-and-sixpence.

And Jack Compton went to Africa, and the wedded pair went to Venice, where the odors preyed on the Immaculate One's nerves, and caused the stock of Byronic quotations, which he had carefully laid up for the occasion, to remain undelivered.

He did not shine in foreign society, either, his knowledge of Continental tongues proving—much to his wife's surprise—of a purely Ollendorffian character; and the Immaculate One found himself playing a very second violin, indeed. He tried to save his dignity by taking refuge in an air of lofty abstraction, while Muriel chattered away fluently in unknown tongues; and the nervous headaches threatened to assume a chronic form, until the Immaculate One found that a foreign climate "did not suit him," and they returned to England much earlier than they had intended doing, greatly to Muriel's satisfaction.

Then the house-furnishing, which had been delayed until their return, began.

"This is lovely, Lawrence, isn't it?" said Muriel, brightly, looking affectionately at the pretty drawing-room, fresh from the hands of the decorator; "the piano can stand there, and the beautiful cabinet mother gave me will just fit in there, and——"

She paused. Her husband's face was gradually assuming an expression that was beginning to be familiar to her. She had found herself thinking of it lately as his "invalid manner."

"I am very sorry, dear," said he, "but I really think that this room cannot be appropriated for a drawing-room; it has not struck you, I suppose, that this is the only room of any size

in the house looking south, and a southern aspect is a necessity of life to me."

"Oh, but, Lawrence!" exclaimed the girl, in dismay, "you cannot want a study of this size. And where are all our pretty things to go? No other room in the house will hold them."

The Immaculate One's hand went to his forehead. "Oh, certainly, my dear Muriel," in a suffering voice, "if you prefer the symmetrical arrangement of the furniture to my health—I say no more—but I *should* have thought—But there!"

And, of course, she yielded, having the usual "good cry"—for which she hated herself—in secret. And the pretty things were crammed into a room much too small for them, or dispersed about the bedrooms. Muriel's girl friends came and admired the drawing-room, and went away and exchanged notes about her lack of taste; and Edith came and called the Immaculate One, "a selfish brute," whereupon Muriel relieved her feelings by having a hearty quarrel with her.

They—the husband and wife—were to have musical evenings together; they had planned them during their courtship; Muriel played the violin, and the Immaculate One played—or thought he played—the piano. The girl, who loved music, had built many pretty castles in the air. So they began.

"My dear Muriel"—thus the Immaculate One, having lost his place in the middle of a passage through undue attention to his fingers—"my dear Muriel," in an aggrieved tone, "can you not hear that your A is flat?"

Muriel gave obedient attention to the "A," while her husband hammered that note impatiently on the piano, seeking meanwhile to regain the lost place. Five minutes later: "Slower, Muriel, slower! Good gracious! have you *no* idea of time? I really think, my dear," with much condescension, "you had better practise steadily for a few weeks before we try again; anything like inaccuracy in

music is absolute torture to me—my ear is so sensitive, my every nerve is on edge."

So the musical-evenings plan faded into oblivion, and the Immaculate One made the acquaintance of a family struggling to get into society, where the daughters accompanied each other and the sons sang. For a time, he spent his evenings with them, and aired his criticisms on art generally, and believed himself to be regarded as an oracle. The daughters voted him a bore, and the sons voted him a prig, and the mother declared him to be a nuisance; but they put up with him because his first cousin was a baronet. Meanwhile, his little wife sat in her crowded, uncomfortable drawing-room, alone.

The Immaculate One possessed what he styled "an eye," which optic seemed to have the power to see simply one side, and that the disagreeable side, of everything. The day usually began in this wise:

"My dear Muriel"—a pause, while he bestowed a peck on his wife's cheek—"you really must speak to Jemima; for the second time I have found a duster on my study-table." Or, "My dear Muriel, can you not see there is a finger-mark on that bracket? It is *these* little worries that try my nerves so terribly." And Muriel became nervous and unstrung; her eyes grew heavy and her pretty mouth took a sorrowful droop, and the devil, who happened not to have much to do just then, incited Jack Compton's sister to remark on the girl's altered looks in one of her letters to her brother; and Jack Compton came home.

"Shocking!" said the lady with the hat, being engaged in character-dissection of a friendly nature, over the tea-cups; "I feel so sorry, so unspeakably sorry for Mr. Lawrence Burton—such a charming man, so artistic, so refined, so——"

"And he bears it so beautifully, too," from a little woman in violet velvet, who had a love-letter in her muff from her husband's particular friend, and

was dying to get away and read it; "it must be so painful to know that every one is talking about her shameless conduct, you know."

"Mr. Compton married her as soon as the divorce was announced; that is one comfort," said the lady with the hat, sighing. The Expected Man had not fulfilled her expectations, and her thoughts were vaguely turning toward good works and an elderly vicar, who secretly loathed her. "Perhaps, Mr. Burton will marry again, poor man! How *could* she leave such a husband?"

"Well," remarked the hostess, one of those delightful old creatures who always call a spade a spade, and pride themselves upon the fact, "all *I* know is that, if I had been in Muriel's place, I should have left him long ago; disgusting prig, *I* call him."

"But he is so very refined and cultured," said her visitor, with a gasp. "It is generally the wife's fault when these things happen; don't you think so, dear?"

"Of course it is, dear, *always*," said the violet-velvet one; and she went away, to read her love-letter in peace.



AT TWILIGHT

WHEN twilight creeps upon thy life and mine,
 And on the margin of the sea we stand,
 Will some forgotten light gleam on the sand,
 Or some lost star in shadow faintly shine?
 Shall we find friendly beacons, or a sign
 To lead us safely to the unknown land
 That lies in far-off beauty, when my hand
 Slips softly for the last time into thine?

When twilight falls, and, hidden in our dust,
 No rose of youth our dimming eyes discern,
 When darkness comes upon us from above,
 Shall we still have unstained our lifelong trust?
 Dear God! Thy utmost lessons we will learn,
 And not complain, if we may keep our love!

MYRTLE REED.



BENEVOLENT USE

"THOSE automobile masks have a very commendable use, after all," remarked Fosdick.

"Go on," said Keedick.

"They hide the automobile face."



ONE WOMAN TO ANOTHER—How well you look! But, then, you look well in anything!

MUSIC AND MOONLIGHT

By Madison Cawein

MOON-ROSES, like a mist,
 Upon the terraced height,
And 'mid the roses, opal, moonlight-kissed,
 A fountain falling white.

And as the full moon flows,
 Orbed fire, into a cloud,
There is a fragrant sound, as if a rose
 Had sighed its soul aloud.

There is a whisper pale,
 As if a rose awoke,
And, having heard in sleep the nightingale,
 Still dreaming of it, spoke.

Now, as from some vast shell,
 A mighty pearl rolls white;
From the unclosing cloud, that winds compel,
 The moon sweeps, big and bright.

Moon-mists and pale perfumes,
 Breeze-borne, along the dusk;
There is a sound, as if unfolding blooms
 Voiced their sweet thoughts in musk.

A spirit is abroad,
 Of music and of sleep;
The moon and stars have made for it a road
 Adown the glimmering deep.

It breathes a tale to me,
 A tale of ancient day;
And, at its word, again I seem to see
 Those towers old and gray;

That castle by the foam,
 Where once our hearts made moan;
And through the night again you seem to come
 Down statued stairs of stone.

Again I feel your hair,
 Dark, fragrant, deep and cool;
You lift your face up, pale with its despair,
 And wildly beautiful.

THE SMART SET

Again your form I strain,
 Again, unto my heart;
 Again your lips, again and yet again,
 I kiss—and then we part!

As centuries ago
 We did in Camelot;
 Where once we lived that life of bliss and woe,
 That you remember not;

When you were Guinevere
 And I was Launcelot . . .
 I have remembered many and many a year,
 And you—you have forgot!



SONG OF THE SEA

THE Occultist
 And the Mesmerist,
 The Metaphysical Mind Curist,
 The Viculturist,
 The Astrologist,
 And the Esoteric Vibrationist,
 The Phrenopathist,
 The Hypnotist,
 As well as the Psychic Scientist,
 Don't comfort me
 When I'm at sea,
 And feel the old, familiar twist.



TWO OF A KIND

MADGE—It was a terrible old boat. The vibration almost shook the breath out of you, the smell of the kerosene lamps was awful, and all the time we were afraid of being blown up.

MARJORIE—It must have felt just like riding in an auto.



HOME IS BEST

SHE—You didn't stay long in London.

HE—No, I couldn't stand it. Over there, everybody knew me for an American right away. Here, in New York, no one ever suspects it.

THE CAT AND THE COIN

By John Regnault Ellyson

SOME evenings ago a guest at an up-town house in Andova, having passed out of the drawing-room, while yet near the unclosed door in the hall, putting on his gloves, overheard by chance some comments, which, after a pause, he very thoughtfully tabulated, in order that he might do full justice to all concerned.

"Was that, madame, a sigh of relief?"

"I am not awfully sorry he's gone."

"He's a good fellow."

"Could any one be quite so homely?"

"Certainly, he's good enough, but homely and sometimes very tedious."

"Yet very amiable, I must say."

"If he had tact and more fancy," observed an elderly lady, "he would really be charming."

"Why, he has positively no imagination whatever," a gentleman remarked.

"True, he never exaggerates—never colors a subject. I have rarely known a person to be so matter-of-fact."

"And how odd," said another, "how odd it is that he has such inordinate curiosity."

"He interrogates rather than converses."

"Don't you think he would make an excellent interviewer?"

"Oh, no," answered the old lady who had already spoken; "no, he's much too modest."

The guest, so described, was none other than myself, and I relate what was said by way of showing you how I am regarded in the social world. Since my courteous friends, with whom I had left my character, mentioned no further particulars, it may not be improper to add that I have quiet man-

ners and a fair notion of form, a reasonable income and some taste; that I appreciate beauty in women and the charms of landscape; that, instead of dipping into costume romances, I go about in search of living chronicles—the piquant histories to be found in the human face; that, when occasion allows, I tranquilly enjoy good wine and good fellowship.

But I admit, because it would be foolish to deny, that curiosity is my passion. Social life, art, beauty and good wine—I abandon these fine things the moment some word or trick or incident strikes the sympathetic chord, to which my whole nature responds. All effort at getting the better of this inquisitive interest ends by rendering me more eager to discover or clear up what seems in any way unusual or mysterious, and, consequently, though not a merchant, nor a member of any profession nor a politician, I have been sufficiently well, if unwisely, employed. My jolly companions have played upon my unfortunate temperament, thrown enticing objects in my path, got me into all kind of scrapes, and laughed at me. I have become more shy, but, if anything, more curious. I have long ago ceased talking of my little exploits, in which I have not always figured gracefully, but I see no especial reason why I should not note down for you, my unknown friend, at least a single recent instance in point.

Early one day last June, I was halting in front of a new shop in Gilmer street, when a man approached, coming from the opposite direction. He was a big chap, with an intelligent ex-

pression and a bronzed face, handsome despite the stubble of a few days' growth on the cheeks. Dressed roughly, his coat on his arm and the bottom of his trousers in his muddy boots, he had the lounging, loose gait and the general air of a countryman. The habit oft proclaims the man, I know, but it also admirably conceals him, at times; the carriage of this one's head and the extreme regularity of his features vaguely suggested a milord in rustic disguise. I looked quickly at his hands; they were those of a true provincial. In the next moment, exchanging glances and nodding, as is the fashion on the road, he walked into the shop, and I saw, as he turned, that he had lost his left ear.

You imagine there is nothing extraordinary in that, and so would almost any one else; but I can assure you that you are wrong. An individual so marked is not confronted at every corner. It is common to see an old man with some teeth out, or a young man without much hair on the top of his head; you frequently meet a man with a missing arm or leg, or a man without an eye; but seek among your acquaintances, observe those you pass in the street, go further, and even travel about a little, and you will find that a man with an ear gone is quite a rarity.

My interest in the person was immediately aroused. To give the countryman time to make his purchase, I strolled down the street and back again, waited a while outside and then entered the shop. Several customers were there, but my man had procured what he wished and sallied forth unobserved.

You will understand why, three days after, on the Lampling Road, across the river from Andova, I felt a certain pleasure in encountering the very same person, under circumstances which resulted in an acquaintance. The wheel of his wagon had caught in a deep rut, and there was the danger of a capsize. I hastened to his assistance, and together we soon set things right. The fellow was cleanly shaved now and trimmer in his attire, but he was just

a trifle tipsy. Besides thanking me for the favor rendered, he offered a drink out of a small, black jug under the seat-board. To keep on friendly terms with him, I wet my lips, and, while he, in his turn, embraced the jug lovingly, I fancied I should secure, without much trouble, the history of the missing ear.

"No common stuff," said he, as he replaced the cork.

"Rather like Squire Torpey's, in Linnwood."

"That's where I got it."

"I know the squire; he always has the best."

"Going up the road?" he asked.

"Yes, I am stretching my legs."

"Well, I'll foot along a bit myself."

So saying, he passed a little ahead of his team, stroked the nose of the sorrel jade, and clucked at her mate. Both followed us at an even pace, and he let his tongue wag, as we sauntered forward on the broad road, between the green hedges.

"I'm gone," said he, "for a week, up to Surry. You've been there? That's a place for trade. Live people—quick sales. Byrd says, 'Home's a fine nest and Surry's far off.' 'Yes,' says I, 'but I know where money doubles.' Byrd's my wife, and a bird she is—sings like a mocker. She's pretty enough, too; but ruffle her feathers, and there's mischief!" he added, laughing.

"With pretty girls," said I, aiming at my mark, "we get our hearts shaken up, if we don't lose our heads."

"There you're right, friend; you can't tell how nigh I come to losing mine. Ever hear of Tom Hatch?"

"I don't think I have."

"He's Byrd's dad. He keeps a big farm on the off-side of Linnwood. I lived there ever since a chick of a thing. When I grew up, you see, I was smart at figuring, bought and sold for the farm, had an eye on the hands, and put accounts in the book along with Byrd."

"And alone with her?" I asked, smiling.

"Yes. And we brushed cheeks often.

Hatch believed nobody was like me, till he found she liked me better."

"So he caught you making love?"

"He walked in one day, and you'd have thought a gale had hit the house. But Byrd—she didn't budge. He had ruffed up her feathers, and she gave him a piece of her mind."

"And how did it end?" I asked, glancing at the left side of his head.

"Not as you reckon, perhaps. He flurried around and fetched his gun. It took no time—all in a wink. Byrd was game. She squared herself in front of me; but, quick as a hare, I turned and set myself 'twixt her and the muzzle. As the gun went off, somebody coming in jostled the old man's arm; the priest——"

And here, like one aware of having already said too much, he stopped, provokingly, leaving the sentence unfinished. For a moment, he scratched at his sleeve, and looked very foolish. I, with the keenest desire to know more, begged him to go on; but all I could get from him on that point was the drawled protest:

"I don't meddle with women and priests."

Soon, however, as if nothing in the least unusual had happened, he began talking on other subjects and continued in the same free strain. To a great deal of what he said, I paid slight heed, being interested only in the story I had heard in part, which, for some reason, it was clearly not his privilege to relate.

Now, before we parted, two miles further on, at the forks of the road, I had, of course, ascertained his name and where he lived, and on my way home formed a neat little plan, the idea of which extremely pleased me.

In a word, I determined to have a chat with his wife. So, in the cool of the next evening, I went across the river once again, and had no trouble in finding the fourth house on the Lapping Road, going west from Linnwood. In a group of oaks, the house with its pointed roof had for background a rolling space of well-sown fields. I opened the gate, and passed up the path,

frightening a couple of cats at play in the shrubbery, and rousing the dog on the porch. The barking of the dog brought forward the woman of the house, whom I saluted and asked about some unimproved neighboring land, that I understood was for sale. While I questioned and she replied, I took a mental picture of the wife. She was small and active, dark, yet pretty; she had a pleasant, air a good-humored face and shapely hands. I observed, too—and this impressed me as much as anything else—that two joints of the forefinger were missing from her right hand.

She answered my question, and I was ready with many others, asking, finally, who owned the farm she occupied. It once belonged to Mr. Hatch; she was his daughter; no, she had not inherited the property, for her father was still alive; her husband had purchased the place a few years back, and she mentioned her husband's name. I raised my eyebrows, and feigned surprise. I told her that I knew him, having met him by chance on two occasions. "And both times," I added, in my quiet manner of making an unexpected remark, "both times, do you know, I greatly wondered how he had lost his ear."

Her features clouded and then brightened with a smile.

"And didn't he tell you?" she asked.

"I never inquired."

"And he'd had no business telling you, anyhow."

"Pray, why?"

"Because that's Father Dekker's affair."

"The priest, madame," said I, pointedly; "and how did the priest come in?"

"Oh, you must ask the good man himself. Nobody can tell a story as he does. He's building a new chapel, and he tells his story and gets money that way."

"Then it's a story worth knowing?"

"That's what they all say."

"And where does the priest live?"

"Just inside Linnwood. You know the church with the gilt cross? His

home's over the way—the house with the yellow blinds. Everybody goes there, now and then. He's a merry, plain man. Sometimes, when he preaches, he makes us laugh. He's precious queer and hard at a bargain, they say, and he earns his bread beside, which is as much as most of us do."

Thus, having begun, she spoke prettily and discreetly of the priest's foibles and virtues, giving me a very fair notion of his manners and looks; "gentle as an old mother, droll and roundish, riding about on his little donkey, and tipping you a jolly smile that's more than a blessing."

I had twice, as you perceive, failed to learn exactly what I wished, and yet there was no doubt in my mind as to where I was going, at the moment when I paid my parting compliments to the wife of Colly Barns.

Twilight was deepening when I reached the scenic nutshell of a cottage, the brown house with yellow blinds. And there, for a moment, I hesitated at the gate, saying to myself: "But why, after all, should I steal in now between the lights? Is it quite fair, and may it not be unfavorable to me? He's a jolly comrade, it is said, but he is also a priest, and a priest cannot forever be jolly. He has his cares, demands upon him hour by hour, numberless offices and devotions to perform; and, in the evening, wearied, perhaps, he seeks and needs repose. No, I'll come to-morrow, in the sunshine of the morning," I said, and passed the house; but, instantly, I turned back, remembering—I scarcely know how it chanced—the variant of a proverb, which a humorous divine once gave in a sermon I heard: "An occasion at hand is worth two in the future." I mention this especially, because it is the only part of any sermon I ever recalled at the right moment, and acted upon wisely.

I followed the path, and mounted the steps. The drowsy-looking lad who answered the bell ushered me directly into the priest's study. One

small lamp was already lighted, and Father Dekker, who was trimming the wick of the second lamp, looked up pleasantly, quit his task, and immediately came toward me.

At my very first glance, I saw that the priest was a much more interesting person than either Colly Barns or his comely wife, and I saw, too, that he lacked an eye. On the turn of sixty, chubby as a great child, almost as broad as long, with a waddling gait, a jovial countenance and simple manners, Father Dekker was just the man I wished to see. I felt so fraternal a feeling for him that I well-nigh embraced the good old gentleman. He held my hand warmly, examined my face closely, and seemed none the less pleased with me. I told him my name, and it brought to his mind a young officer, who had died on one of the battlefields of 1862.

"He was my uncle, I dare say."

"Indeed, yes; I can now see the family likeness. He was of those who fell nobly."

The priest sat down by my side, after finding me a comfortable seat, and related many agreeable episodes of my uncle's life in the camp and the field, many of his jests and tales, and many of his daring escapades. I was struck with Father Dekker's excellent memory and his happy whim of carrying his hearer with him, of vitalizing the picture he described. He was still talking of my uncle, when the drowsy lad came in and drawled out something I did not catch.

"Oh, yes, yes," said the priest, in reply to the lad's question, "bring in your coffee and crackers, and we will sup right here. You shall see," he added, as the boy went out, "you shall see, my friend, what fine coffee a brat can make, who knows the taste of nothing but milk. A little stupid, a little slow, but he's always within call; a nice hand and home-loving, and that's what I like in him."

The table, placed between us, was soon spread, without any clatter. The inconsiderable repast consisted of crisp, brown wafers, savory, pickled lamb's

tongue and coffee. After the simple meal, we had a bottle of very pure wine and some excellent cigars.

Smiling and as familiar as two old school-fellows, we sipped and smoked and chatted. When a chance presented, I made bold and confessed my mission, or a part of it—that is to say, the desire of meeting the genial priest and of contributing to his new chapel fund. I put in his palm, in fact, all I had about me—a trifling sum in notes. He was cordially grateful, spoke of the necessity of a new chapel, the style in which it should be built, how much money was now in hand and how much was yet needed. These and a hundred kindred matters he talked of, and at every moment I fancied I was going to hear the bit of anticipated history. Though more than two hours elapsed and no hint of it escaped him, I knew perfectly well the story would come. Ample time there was for that, and, so far as I was concerned, no reason to hurry; he and I might prattle, indeed, until dawn. And, besides, the priest was really so droll, so alert, so full of crotchets and fine waggers that I could have remained with him, I thought, for some days, without becoming in the least wearied.

But, ever and again, as my passion warmed and awakened, I sought means of shifting the gossip where I wished, and so making a climax for the evening. I frequently led him to the very subject, but he eluded me and alighted at a different point. It was exceedingly amusing, as if playing a game that never ended. I chose to ignore the true object I had at heart, and this, likewise, he chose to ignore. The ingenious and amiable father, with rare humor, wavered, approached and hesitated, drew back and turned around; he dallied like a girl with her lover, hung his shaggy head, quaintly, like a big flower, chirped like a sparrow, babbled like a little stream among the rocks, and did everything except step into his castle of Spain, and fling open its doors for the pleasure of his guest.

And time went on. He grew more

jocular and diverting. He told me how he lost his flesh once, and how he gained double the amount of it; how he lost his great taste for garlic; how he lost his rosary in the woods one day, and how he found it on the roadside before sundown; how he lost his dog on a dark night, and how it discovered the footpad lying in wait to rob him; how he lost his balance on the brink of a walled spring; how he lost his purse thrice in an hour, and how, in another hour, he lost thrice the value of the purse.

"But how," said I, at last, hearing so much of losses, "how, my good friend—tell me, how you lost your eye?"

"Ha! ha!" shouted the priest, shaking his sides.

"Is it so comical?" I demanded.

"Comical?" he echoed. "Well, well! of that you must be the judge. It's my story of 'The Cat and the Coin'—the story with which I am building my new chapel."

"Why, how extremely odd!" I cried.

"Is it so odd—money got in this way?—something given for something received? Isn't it honest—a good tale for a neat sum? Isn't it quite fair—both parties being pleased? Doesn't it kindle two most natural emotions—the pleasure of giving and the pleasure of receiving? There was a time when the church lived by begging, or by the bequests of old sinners; to-day we have, besides, our fairs, our excursions, our concerts, to which nobody objects. We get money, also, from corn and wine and oil, or from the dealers therein, and the money may have come crookedly, but nobody says so. 'Money is money,' said I to the bishop, who didn't at first think well of my plan, 'and money is what I need. You know, all is as one in the church plate,' I added; 'the dime of the maid and the dollar of the harlot, the dirty bill of the banker and the bright guinea of the gambler.' 'There!' said the bishop, 'there! go on with your story.'"

"Yes, dear friend," said I, laughing, "do go on with your story, I pray."

As the words fell from my lips, there came the sound of soft shuffling on the floor. We turned. It was the drowsy lad, who had entered the room, moving toward us.

"Father, there's a man at the door," said he; "somebody's dying."

"Some one is dying?" murmured the priest, in low, sweet tones, as he crossed himself, "God rest his soul! And who is he, my child?"

"The man says his name is Hatch."

"Tom Hatch! He sends for me? In all conscience, this is truly very strange, indeed!" And off he went, to speak with the messenger.

The lad lingered behind, near the table on one side of the room. I looked at the grotesque shadow he cast, at the crucifix above the shadowy head, and at the clock still higher on the wall. I gave a slight start—the hours had passed so swiftly; it was twelve by the timepiece. I felt ashamed of myself for prolonging my visit. I rose, and, when, a moment or so later, the priest returned, I began to apologize.

"No, no; not a word on that score," said he, pressing me tenderly back in my chair. He told the lad to saddle the donkey, and then turned to me.

"The evening has been delightful," he said, "and I only regret the interruption. I may not be absent long; I beg you to stay here—to spend the night, if you can put up with the small comfort of a priest's bed, and I shall be glad if you don't refuse. I am going," he added, "on a mission I don't fancy. I know this man Hatch, and I have known him under very peculiar circumstances. His is a strong character and a bad one. Hot, headlong, vindictive, he has ugly moods. And yet he's better educated than most individuals of his class, and has a really shrewd mother-wit. Early in his life he imbibed the doctrines of Tom Paine, and improved on them, as he says. Even at this critical moment, he sends me word that he wishes none of my offices, that he merely wishes me. I have tried too often to sway him; he can't be moved. As a priest, there's

nothing to be done; merely as a man, I may do some good. Now, make yourself at home; amuse yourself, and, if I am delayed, my lad will show you into my room and render you as comfortable as possible. In the morning, we'll breakfast together, and we'll have my famous little story."

Excusing himself, then, he exchanged his slippers for his laced shoes, his cassock for his coat, tucking carefully a silk handkerchief about his throat, drew on his big hat over his shaggy hair, and was soon gone forth on the mission, which proved to be much more singular and painful than he imagined.

I undertook to amuse myself, but it was rather a serious matter. The life of the house went out when the priest went. I sat in his easy-chair, leather-covered and cool, and sipped his wine and smoked his cigars. I waited and I dozed. At the end of two hours, as he was still absent, I rang for the servant, and confessed that I could scarcely keep my eyes open.

No man of the world, it is said, rests well in a priest's bed. I do not know whether it is presumed that the bed is usually too hard, or that conscience there troubles the repose of the ungodly; but I freely avow that I did not sleep much, for altogether another reason.

The chamber was of fair size and airy and trimly furnished. There were two beds, at opposite angles of the room. The drowsy servant was obliging, but extremely sluggish. Part of the time, he seemed half asleep. He roused himself when I spoke, and stirred around, after his fashion, and then again fell into a stupid, listless state. I found myself watching him; I cannot say why. He stepped softly, moved slowly. He had an animal's way of rubbing against things, and his voice was a kind of purr. I could not guess his age; he was young, and yet he was wrinkled. He had very round eyes, hair running to within an inch of his brows, long ears peaked into a needle's point, a decidedly sharp chin, the flat nose of the feline tribe, and

cattish whiskers at the edges of his mouth. When I turned my face from him, I could see him still.

After this napping creature had done his service and answered twenty questions or more, he retired into the adjoining room—the priest's study—where he curled himself on the rug. Soon he was deep in slumber; I could hear his measured breathing. I lowered the light and put off my clothes, lay down and dozed; but, at every other moment, I awoke. The bed was comfortable; and a fresh, light wind came in through the open casement. I was drowsy, but each time I dozed the lad seemed to be moving about the room, here or there, around the bed or in some corner; yet, each time I wakened, I saw him in the same position, lying curled up on the rug. It was, of course, very foolish, very absurd. The lad's features had simply fixed themselves on my retina, and the capricious action of some set of nerve-cells kept them flitting.

At last, I fell asleep in good earnest. I could not have slept long, and I was roused in the most startling conceivable manner. I heard a series of hoarse, harsh cries, wild and unhalloed sounds, neither natural nor human—sounds that seemed to rise from the foot of the bed. I have experienced, in my life, many emotions, but I think I was never so perfectly unstrung, so really alarmed. Such was my sense of confusion and horror that I found myself incapable of moving; I lay stricken on my back, my eyes set and my jaw hanging.

I could see nothing immediately around or near me; but I could see into the next room. The lad—but where was he? He was nowhere visible, and nobody else was in the line of my vision. There were footsteps, however, in the hall and in the study—some one's firm tread and some one's slow gait.

I uttered a low cry; the priest appeared at the door.

"Ah, my young friend, are you awake?"

I could not reply.

"Bring me a light, my child," said he, coming forward, quickly.

The servant brought the lamp, and stood by my side.

"Bless my soul, what's happened?" cried the priest, observing the startled look in my eyes and my lips wide apart. "Good Mother in heaven! What, are you ill?"

By this time, I had, in a measure, recovered from my bewilderment, but speech hung in my throat. It was impossible to articulate; my lower jaw, as if it had received a heavy blow, seemed stiffened or paralyzed. However, I could wag my tongue, nod my head, move my hands, lift my legs.

I hastily shook my head, therefore, in reply to the priest's question, and sought to explain by signs. I closed my eyes, indicating that I had been asleep; I touched my ears and made a guttural noise, in witness of what I had heard.

The pantomime was intelligible, but Father Dekker appeared to be perplexed as to the nature of my injury. He looked from me to the lad, who held the lamp, and, obtaining no satisfaction from the fellow's blank countenance, he bent down again, fingered me tenderly, examined me attentively, and soon discovered the character of the mishap.

My jaw was dislocated.

For the next few minutes, he was as busy as could be, gentle as a woman, composed as a surgeon, reassuring and tactful; he went through a simple yet painful process, setting the jaw in place, and, afterward, binding a bandage under my chin and over my head, as though he had been doing the same thing every day in his life.

"An unhappy accident, but not at all serious," said he, in concluding the task. "You will laugh over it tomorrow. Don't attempt to talk—no, sip a little wine through your teeth now; 'twill invigorate and revive you. I understand—some noise or other wakened you suddenly out of a deep sleep, startled you, and you opened your mouth just a bit too wide. It's nothing; I have twice had the same

accident myself, and both times it occurred while snoring."

Then, turning to the servant, he asked:

"What noises or sounds did my young comrade hear?"

"Noises? sounds?" drawled the lad; "I heard nothing—nothing but the braying of your donkey, as he passed the window."

Moving aside to hide his smiles, the amiable priest dismissed the servant, came and sat by the bed, chatting in his soothing, pleasant manner. He rose after a while, put off his clothes, knelt for some moments at the back of a chair, got up again, lowered the lamp, showed me the threads of sunlight through the closed blinds, and then drew down the shade.

"Now, let's take a little snooze," said he, stretching himself in the bed at the opposite corner of the room.

We breakfasted at noon.

Thanks to the priest's promptness and skill, I was not much inconvenienced by my ridiculous accident. The muscles were yet somewhat sensitive, but the bandage had been cast by. I could chat; I could eat, though with difficulty. I expected my curiosity to be gratified, and I confess I was not disappointed. I had from the old gentleman, indeed, such facts as I presume he never again related.

At the table, I observed more than once that Father Dekker was not exactly himself, by no means the jolly soul of the preceding evening. He did not prattle so carelessly, so delightfully. He ate little, and appeared to be very much absorbed. But, the meal over and the servant out of the way, the priest, leaning against the arm of his chair and putting his hand on that of mine, said:

"I don't know whether it is seemly or excusable to unveil a corner of life which God in His wisdom hides. I may be wrong in so doing, but I am determined to tell you what I heard and what I witnessed, while away from home last night—things so incredible that I can hardly believe

them now, sitting with you here in the clear light of this beautiful day. I shall give the outlines and only such details as are needed, and I shall spare you any comment upon them.

"When I arrived at Hatch's, the scullion led me up-stairs into the old man's chamber, where he lay, haggard and worn, propped up among his pillows. He hadn't mixed with people for several years; he had no confidential associates. The three persons standing near his bed—a lawyer of Linnwood, whom I knew, and two of my own neighbors—were there for a purpose. In fact, Hatch held in his hand a will, which had been signed and attested. As I entered, and before I could salute any one, he asked those present to retire below-stairs; then he beckoned to me.

"'I bring you here,' said he, 'not as a priest, but as a man and in your own interest rather than mine. Here is my will; I place it now in your keeping. I have done what will surprise the world and may surprise you; I have made you my sole heir, on the condition merely that my flesh and kin shall in no wise be benefited by what I leave.'

"I took the document, which I didn't read, tore it into four parts, folded the pieces, and held them over the flame of the lamp until the slips were consumed.

"'See! You've got your nails burnt for your trouble!' he exclaimed, and seemed malignantly to relish the notion.

"'Your lawyer is here,' said I, 'and your attestators. I shall call them. You are too clear-headed a man, Tom Hatch, not to make a sensible will.'

"'Stop! Stay where you are!' he cried. 'Let it rest!' And he added: 'Now, since you don't desire to be regarded as a man, I'll address you as a priest.'

"'That is as it should be,' I answered.

"His brows contracted; he coughed. His voice, when he spoke, was thick and husky.

"'My hours are numbered. You see my condition. Do you respect the

wishes of a wretch on the grave's brink?'

"Ask what you will——"

"I beg that you remain here until I am dead."

"If this is your desire——"

"But promise on your honor, by your faith in the Cross——"

"I promise," I said.

"Well, go there, lock the door, fetch the key; then come and sit down at my side."

"I did as he requested, and took a chair at the edge of the bed. The key, which he seized, he hid within the folds of his gown, somewhere under the light coverlet. He looked up and laughed.

"I have you now, sir priest, and I have you just where I want you—caught in the trap like an old rat. You are mine. No need of any apprehensions! See, I can do you no bodily harm. You know me; you know I don't forgive. You wouldn't become the tool of revenge, my honest rogue, but you'll not forget your insolence the rest of your days. Ah, sit down! I am going to show you how one can die in the presence of a priest and without his aid; how one with blood on his hands can confess and still refuse absolution; and how one can commit a crime right under your nose, and yet not be discovered. There! ease your fat flanks; sit down, I say! Remember your promise, and I'll remember my share of the bargain!"

"He looked at me a long while, in silence, and then resumed:

"You've been in these parts about twelve years, I think, feeding your flock of geese and picking their feathers. Some half-score years before, when my wife died, I came into this land's end. Besides the tot, my daughter, whom I curse and don't count, I had in the family my sister and her husband—that is, a man and a woman and one who was neither. This person, in fact, was a born eunuch, and better it is to hive with bees or nest with lizards than to have pinned to your sleeve a creature of the sort, restless always, busy in mischief, nettling and

caressing by turns. It's well enough to speak of him as my brother. He was not so old as I, slim and no taller than my sister, with dark skin wrinkled like bark, a head covered with sorrel ringlets, brows in a peak, white little jagged teeth from which the lips went back like a fise's, and round, yellowish eyes splashed like a cat's.

"They called him Polly—he seemed so droll! He dressed in male attire, but he wore ear-drops and bands on his fingers. He was vain of his hands, and they, like his tongue, were ever in motion. He chattered incessantly and talked to himself when none else was by. But he didn't mix much with strangers, or go far. He hung by those he knew. You could flatter him, and he, too, could flatter you. No one was more free with pet terms. Often, I don't know why, he called me "Chicky," and every time he did my blood mounted. He tickled or stung, and yet you couldn't shake him off; if you threatened, he feigned and shivered and all that, but he feared nothing. My sister, who was rather devout, said that Polly would dare make faces at St. Michael and his sword. Very demure at times, it was then wise to heed him narrowly—his tricks began. He lied, and you believed his lies. He stole and left no clue. There was no good to be got out of him. He never worked as a man works. He cooked, sewed, cleaned the house, milked the cows, if he chose; but, mostly, he idled his time in planting slips and trimming vines, digging worms for birds and keeping the pigeons and his cats apart. All in all, he was very absurd; he had a little dance movement in walking, and he spoke in a thin, soft voice, with a sing-song twitter. Over and again, in the early days, I wondered what he was made for, and I have since learned.

"Now, I came here with money, bought land, pushed my aims, strove hard and thrived; though I had troubles, large and small. There was my sister's husband, for instance, who drank. If ever I saw a monkey in

liquor, it was he—an idiot and a pest in one; yet, sometimes, at long intervals he was sober. Again, there was my sister—a practical girl, except as regarded her mate and Polly's pets. She doted on the monkey and abhorred the cats. The scenes grew worse day by day, and, finally, I settled Polly to himself, on a place called Point-Roof.

"Then occurred the death of my sister, at the birth of her boy—two misfortunes, you observe. I buried her, of course, in your Christian fashion, decently. There followed a bad phase of an old annoyance; my sister's husband, after his wife died, was drunk for one whole year. He needed rest. It was fitting, I thought, that he should be drowned. The body never came to light, because the well in which he stumbled was filled and never opened.

"However, this didn't bring my vexations to a close. The creature at Point-Roof, somehow, discovered the affair of the well, and I paid dearly for his silence, in hard coin. Sly, audacious, every inch a knave, he wooed me as only he could, cringed at my heels, cajoled and duped me. He had a miser's lust, a fiend's cunning. He fleeced and robbed me, and hid away the gold I reluctantly yielded. He even kindled my own thirst for gain, fanned my hopes, persuaded me that he possessed secrets worth getting, and thus saved himself for years.

"But I couldn't be eternally hooded and duped—I couldn't be eternally plundered. So, one night, I went to the house at Point-Roof, where I had never gone. You should have seen his room! I have seen it every night in my sleep since then. It was small, clean as a new broom, and cool as a nook in the woods. It was all green and blue and white. He had colored the walls with indigo-wash, and it was sprucely done. He had sand-rubbed the floor, until it was smoother than a planed board. The bed in one corner looked as if spread by a girl—as bright as the "white-caps" in the moonshine outside. Some things I had missed from

home were here—the brass poles over the windows, the lace curtains, patched and stiff with starch, and the little bureau, with glass knobs, that had belonged to my mother. The shelf of the mantel, raised into two steps, was filled with ornaments—things, also, I had missed—bits and jars, a lamp of my father's, an old gilt snuff-box of mine, candlesticks and flowers in pots. Save for the jars and the snuff-box, you would have said, perhaps, that it resembled an altar. Beside the table, near the wall, were two willow chairs.

"I sat in one of these; he sat in the other, sly and fawning. He patted his foot softly, played with his hands, and spoke in his humming, low tone, somewhat between a prattle and a croon—spoke of his petty concerns, the well that had gone dry, the cat that had died, and the strange hawk that he had trapped. I listened a while, and then, bestirring myself, told him he had better at once give up the secrets he boasted of, and make his peace with his Maker, if he cared, as I intended helping him, by the devil's grace, into heaven that night.

"But he showed no alarm. He laughed and shook the rings in his ears, chirping in his kind of sing-song.

"Very well, Chicky," said he; "I know what's coming. I am yours, and I'll tell you. It goes far back and it runs down near, but I'll tell you all you wish—all you wish, and more. One day it happened, when I was young, an old, old dame came to my mother's, and gave me a little black kitten. I kissed her and thanked her, and she caught me in her arms, set me on her knee, fondled my hair, and called me pretty names. Then she whispered something in my ear. She said there were strange times coming. But I must wait, she said, wait for the new land—I must love what grows and creeps and moans, she said, and cling to my brother. When he put me by, I must watch him and watch him, for there were strange times coming. One would die, and one be born, and one go missing. I must

watch you, Chicky, she said, and watch the well. And she told me there was gold to be got, and how; and how I could stay your hand for a long while, and how my end would come, and yours."

"“And how shall my days end?” I asked.

"“Why, with a crime, under the priest’s nose, at the second crowing of the cock—in the strange times that are coming,” said he; and ceased, for something glittered at his throat.

"“I twisted the blade, and the farce was done. I searched then for the hidden coin; searched the house inside and outside, searched along the boards and shelves and under stones, in all places and all corners, down-stairs and above, but nowhere could the gold be found.

"“Did you hear, sir priest, a sound in the air?”

"“I heard a cock crow,” I answered.

"“The early bird catches the worm,” he muttered, and hoarsely chuckled.

"“I should have turned away,” added the priest, “but his voice had now grown thick and faint. He spoke no more. Shadows were passing across his face, and wild lights flickered in his eyes. There was a momentary swaying of the body. The arms were lifted, the coverlet thrown down, and I saw the knife, with which an artery had been opened, and the red dew of blood.

"“There are times when one cannot move—when one cannot pray. I know not why I listened so eagerly for his last breath, nor by what sorcery it was that I heard merely the second crowing of the cock.”

As the priest ceased speaking, he swept his hand over his brow, as if wiping away some vision that hung there. It was easy to see that he still shuddered.

But the prim, bright room in which we sat, the fresh, sweet air, the rare beauty of the day, the tender, serene glimpses of the sky between the trees, the fluttering of the leaves and the birds in the neighboring

garden, made me gradually realize that there are idyllic charms in life and sunny levels, as well as somber dreams and deeps.

After some moments’ pause, I ventured a remark.

"And the other story, father,” said I, “is that pleasing and gay?”

"Ah, I fear,” said the old confessor, with a sigh, “I fear I shall never have heart to tell my story again—as it must be told to pass as ‘pleasing and gay’—as I have told it so often. No, impossible! I think I could not. But I’ll relate what may, perhaps, interest you more—the simple facts on which I builded my little story, and which in a way complete the dark tale that has shadowed mine.

"Hatch reared his nephew roughly and concealed his kinship, but he brought out the boy’s sturdier qualities. I am not sure he wasn’t as proud of him, at times, as of his daughter. Both were of the type he cared for—spirited and vigorous, industrious and clever. Thrown together latterly with more freedom, they grew to love each other, as young ones will, and screened instinctively this affair of their hearts. But Hatch, as you find the old ones always doing, discovered the attachment. He made a terrible scene. When I stepped in, drawn from the road by the noise of high words, he was aiming his gun at the boy’s head. I touched his arm; he missed his aim, and the lad didn’t receive so much as a scratch.”

"And his ear?” I asked.

"No, no,” said the priest, “no, he didn’t lose his ear on that occasion. I read them all a caustic lecture, and afterward, as I thought, effected a reconciliation. But, the morning following, Hatch again showed his choler, and the lovers ran off and married.

"Some time before,” continued the priest, “Colly had purchased with his savings a little farm—the place called Point-Roof—and there they settled. All would have gone on merrily, but for the girl’s odd fancy. She loved cats, and had nursed this

fancy secretly at her father's. The pretty animal she had hitherto kept in her chamber, going at large now in the new quarters, mated and multiplied. There were many in the first brood, and a bevy of visitors. Colly, whose antipathy to the cat tribe was marked, soon displayed his humor, and adopted high-handed measures, which resulted in numerous little storms. One day, being, unhappily, in his cups, he attempted to get into the house and slay a newborn litter of kittens, but the plucky girl, quick and strong, slammed the door and Colly's ear paid the penalty. By one of those accidents deemed inconceivable until they occur, the ear was caught between the edge of the door and the jamb, and the doctor who was sent for prudently clipped off what was left."

"And this—did this cool his ardor?" I questioned.

"If it had cooled his ardor," he responded, smiling, "I shouldn't have lost my eye."

"Was it a case," I asked, playfully, "in which one's loss proved another's gain?"

"That's it, exactly! While his wife was preparing supper one evening, Colly amused himself by catching the cats and dropping them into the rain-barrel under the side window. One got out of his reach, mounted the shelf over the door, and he, eager and indiscreet, ran into the kitchen, and picked up his gun. The girl came softly after his heels, and, when he aimed at the cat on the shelf, she leaped forward suddenly and clutched at the muzzle. As it happened, she lost the first joints of her forefinger at the same instant that I, opening the door without knocking, lost my eye. For a moment or more there was a hubbub—

a sad confusion. But in a most incredibly short time, removed to the best bed in the house, I was being attended by two physicians from Linnwood and by one of the nursing Sisters of Mercy, brought from Andova.

"My active young friends, when they learned that my condition was not so bad as they supposed, went into that part of the house where the accident occurred, and, while there examining and setting things in shape, made a very surprising discovery which, with the other excitement of the evening, kept them wide-awake all night. The ball, which had rebounded and grazed my left eye, had first broken away the loosened jamb of the door, and the stuffed carcass of a cat had slipped out of the boarding of the wall; this, being roughly handled, burst, and from the dried cat's skin rolled a hatful of gold.

"The next morning, they came to me—two such dear, red-eyed, desolate creatures as you have never seen—knelt by the bedside and sobbed, telling me what they had found, and naïvely offering me the whole of the bright gold coin, that half-filled one of Byrd's brown stockings. They were tearful, sad, utterly inconsolable, until I began laughing. Despite myself, I was laughing at the story—as I thought it should run—and thinking how well it might serve the project I had in mind. And, accordingly, I struck a bargain with them. Here are the terms in brief: There should be no more wrangling at Point-Roof; in future, Byrd should have two pets, with which Colly should not tamper; if the pets multiplied, however, then his rights began; the treasure should be theirs—and the story should be mine."



HELD UP

GLADYS—Did he get on his knees when he proposed to you?
 MARIE—No, I was already on them.

SANTA'S SOLILOQUY

By Aloysius Coll

I WONDER, now, which stocking she
Will hang for me to fill!
I cannot choose my lady's gift
For Christmas morn, until
I learn just whether I shall leave
Her precious gift to lurk
Deep in a toe of glossy silk,
Or net of open-work.

It all depends on mesh and weave,
And style and stitch and thread—
The gift I leave my lady fair,
When she is snug in bed;
Some stockings stretch a mile or more—
A coach and four would fit;
While some would scarcely hold a grudge,
They are so tightly knit.

My lady has a pair as green
And silken as the sea;
But what their stretching power remains
A riddle unto me.
She has a pair that's black and long—
She wears them on the beach;
I wonder, will she hang them up?
I hope they're out of reach.

Her golfing plaids are strong and tight,
And wide and thick and stout;
But they are used so much that I'm
Afraid the toes are out!
That flimsy pair she wears to balls,
To match a gown of white—
I scarcely think she'll risk to hang
Them up on Christmas night.

Perhaps she'll buy a brand-new pair
For Christmas, or she'll hire
A pair of extra size to hang
Before the chimney fire.
In all my years I never was
In such perplexing plight—
What stockings will my lady fair
Hang up on Christmas night?

THE GREAT SECURITY BANK MYSTERY

WHEN the watchman of the Security National Bank awakened from his nap, which he was quite sure had not lasted more than three or four hours, he was astonished to find the door of the great vault lying on the floor. Never before, in the whole six months during which he had faithfully guarded the interests of the bank, had such an unheard-of thing happened, and something told him that he ought to notify somebody. So he went to the telephone, and rang up the president of the bank. The latter, though plainly annoyed by being disturbed at such an hour, praised the watchman for his zeal, and said he would give the matter his personal attention, as soon as he had made the necessary changes in his attire. Meanwhile, he asked the watchman to notify the police and also to request the cashier to appear at the bank as soon as possible.

The president and the cashier arrived on the scene, simultaneously. Entering the bank, they found a sergeant of police and two patrolmen, together with a gentleman in citizen's clothes, whom the sergeant introduced as Mr. Hoyle, adding, in an impressive stage-whisper: "Sure, ye've heard uv Showman Hoyle. He's over here on a visit, an' th' old man put him on this case, so he wudn't fale lonesome wid nawthin' to do."

The great detective swept the room with a glance of his keen, gray eyes. One felt, instinctively, that nothing could escape this wonderful man. And nothing did. When he had seen enough to satisfy him, he spoke, quietly, but with an air of conviction. "There has been a robbery," was all he said.

The solution was simple; yet no one had thought of it before. With breathless interest, they waited to hear what he would say next. "The robber," continued Hoyle, "was evidently unfamiliar with the combination of the vault." Then, seeing the look of amazement on the faces of those present, he continued: "Otherwise, it would not have been necessary to use explosives."

After a glance into the open vault, the detective's face lighted up, with the joy of one who has made an important discovery. It was the first sign of emotion he had shown. "The burglar," he announced, confidently, "was a man of less than medium height."

"But how—?" began the president.

"Very simple, indeed," interrupted the detective. "Do you not see that package of thousand-dollar bills on the top shelf? If the burglar had been tall enough, he would have reached them. Furthermore, he was not a professional cracksman, or he would have carried a step-ladder for use in just such emergencies."

Paying no attention to the murmur of approval which greeted his wonderful exhibition of deductive analysis, Hoyle picked up his hat, and made as if to go. At the door, he paused and turned toward the three policemen who were looking at him in open-mouthed astonishment. "Well, sergeant," he said, sharply, "what are you waiting for? You have heard my description. Why don't you go out and find the man?"

ISAAC ANDERSON.



IT must be torturing to a prima donna to realize she has lost her voice, but it is much more torturing to her audience when she doesn't realize it.

LA FÊTE DE MA FEMME

Par Octave Pradels

QUELLE journée je viens de passer!

C'est aujourd'hui la Sainte Angèle, la fête de ma femme.

Ce matin, je m'étais dit:

"Quoi lui offrir? Un bouquet? c'est banal. Un bijou? il faut tout de suite y mettre le prix; c'est ennuyeux. C'est le moment des primeurs; si je lui offrais une magnifique botte d'asperges? D'autant plus que je les adore, moi, les asperges!"

Sitôt pensé, sitôt exécuté; je vais acheter tout ce qu'il y avait de mieux. Six francs la botte! Je remonte, et, avec le visage souriant d'un bon mari qui croit avoir rempli son devoir, j'entre dans la chambre de ma femme qui était en train de détortiller ses bigoudis.

"Qui est-ce qui a fait une surprise à sa Gégèle pour sa fête?"

"Vrai? oh! que tu es gentil!" me répond-elle, en cherchant à voir ce que je cachais derrière mon dos.

Je l'embrasse sur les deux joues et, radieux, je lui tends la botte d'asperges; mais Angèle fait un nez! oh! mais un de ces nez!

"C'est ça?"

"Oui; une vraie surprise, hein?"

"Et c'est tout?"

"Mais oui."

"Ah! vous ne vous ruinerez pas pour votre femme, vous!"

Quand Angèle me dit: "vous," c'est que ça se gâte; aussi je m'empresse de faire valoir mon cadeau:

"Mais, regarde donc comme elles sont belles! Six francs la botte! Je ne lésine pas, tu vois. Tiens! on peut les manger jusqu'au bout, et même au-delà!"

Et j'appelle la bonne:

"Françoise, vous ferez cuire ces magnifiques asperges pour notre déjeuner; nous les mangerons à l'huile."

"Non," fait Angèle d'un ton sec, "à la sauce blanche."

"Mais, pourtant——"

"Oh! naturellement, vous cherchez à me contrarier!"

"Pas du tout, mais——"

"Oui, je vous comprends: vous espérez, en me forçant à boire du vinaigre, hâter le délabrement de ma poitrine."

"Angèle, je t'assure——"

"Inutile! Vous ne m'habituez pas à vos goûts communs. Oh! non!"

"Communs? Ah! mais——"

"Je n'en mangerai pas de vos asperges; je les déteste, et vous avec!"

"Ah! tu vas trop loin, tu sais!"

"Vous ne m'empêcherez pas de parler, je suppose!" de dire que vous n'êtes qu'un.

"N'achève pas!"

"Qu'un pleutre!"

"Angèle!"

"C'est ça—insultez-moi, maintenant—pendant que vous y êtes! Battez-moi! Mais je ne me laisserai pas faire—et tenez!"

Et elle prend son chapeau, ouvre la porte et se sauve en criant:

"Vous ne me reverrez jamais!"

II

JE restai rouge de colère.

Mais, au bout de cinq minutes, la peur me prend. Je la connais; elle est très-vive, ma femme. Je descends dans la rue: je ne la vois pas. Je

cours, inquiet. J'arrive au Pont-Neuf.

J'aperçois un rassemblement.

Un pressentiment horrible m'étreint. Je vois un petit pâtissier qui portait sur la tête un plateau sur lequel était une bombe glacée. Je lui demande en tremblant :

"Qu'est-ce que c'est?"

"Ah! m'sieu, elle doit être noyée!"

"Son nom? Dis vite!"

"Je ne sais pas, moi; mais elle était rudement gentille!"

"Mon ami," lui dis-je, "informe-toi, je t'en prie, tâche de savoir."

"J'ai pas l'temps; vous voyez donc pas que j'porte l'dessert à des bourgeois qu'est pressés?"

Je dégringole l'escalier qui mène au bord de l'eau. Je retirais déjà une manche de mon veston, mais heureusement je me rappelle que je ne sais faire que cinq brassées, et encore sur un fond de bois! Je remets donc ma manche, et je plonge—mes yeux dans l'eau de tous côtés.

Rien!

Je descends la Seine: rien!

J'arrive au pont des Invalides et je vois un rassemblement. Je repalpite. C'était un cheval qui s'était abattu. Je perds vingt minutes à le voir relever, et je continue à descendre le bord de l'eau. Enfin, j'arrive au Point-du-Jour.

Je me dis: "Je l'aurai dépassée!"

Je remonte.

Au pont de Grenelle, je vois un troisième rassemblement, et mon petit pâtissier qui n'avait plus que la moitié de sa bombe glacée; l'autre s'était fondue au soleil.

"Qu'est-ce que c'est?"

"Eh ben! on vient de la retirer d' l'eau."

"Ah! parle vite: elle est—"

"Tiens! c'te bêtise! Elle est morte, parbleu!"

Je sens mes jambes qui flageolent; je défaille; mais un effort suprême de volonté me ranime, et je dis au petit pâtissier, dont la bombe fondait toujours:

"Mon ami, voici vingt francs, et ma

carte. Fais-la transporter à mon domicile. Je n'ai pas le courage de la regarder."

Et je me sauve comme un fou.

III

J'ARRIVE chez moi, en nage.

Je sonne; la bonne m'ouvre.

Elle n'avait pas l'air navré, mais souvent les domestiques tiennent si peu à leurs maîtres!

Je me laisse choir sur une chaise; la bonne me dit:

"Monsieur ne va pas auprès de madame?"

"Non; je n'ose pas, après ce qui s'est passé. Ah! la malheureuse!"

"Bah! Madame aura pardonné à monsieur."

"Tu crois, Françoise?"

"Dame! elle n'a pas l'air fâché."

"On l'a donc déjà rapportée?"

"Je ne sais pas, mais elle est dans la salle-à-manger."

"Allons! de l'énergie!" me dis-je.

"Fais ton devoir. Va demander pardon à sa dépouille."

Frémissant, j'ouvre la porte de la salle-à-manger—et je vois ma femme—en train de manger les asperges et qui me dit:

"Eh bien! tu sais, elles sont excellentes, et je ne t'en veux plus!"

Je ne trouve rien à dire: j'étais hypnotisé!

On sonne, et la bonne introduit le petit pâtissier dont la bombe était fondue et qui me présente le corps d'une chienne noyée.

Je comprends tout!

Alors, le bonheur m'étouffe! J'embrasse la bonne et le petit pâtissier, à qui je donne vingt francs. Je retourne à ma femme, et je l'embrasse, fou de joie. Mais ma joie s'apaise en apercevant qu'Angèle vient d'ingurgiter la dernière asperge.

Et à la sauce blanche encore!

Avec tout ça, ma botte d'asperges m'a coûté quarante-six francs, et je n'en ai pas mangé!

Une autre fois, j'achèterai un bijou.

BEAUTY'S PASSING

By Marvin Dana

A KING of the olden day
Rode forth in royal state;
With all his train in fair array,
Rode out through the palace gate.

He fared to seek a bride,
A mate for his hand and throne,
A queen to make him his kingdom's pride,
A woman to make his own.

"God-speed!" a maiden smiled,
"God-speed thy queen to bring!"
It was the keeper's lovely child,
Her beauty thrilled the king.

"Fair is the keeper's maid,
And fairer shall she be,
That princess," thus the monarch said,
"Who is to wed with me."

The king rode north and west,
To east and south he sped;
To many a court he took his quest,
But he found no queen to wed.

The maidens of royal state
Could never a one compare
With that peasant lass at the keeper's gate,
So simple, so sweet, so fair.

A dozen years were flown,
The king rode home once more.
At his gate he found her—a woman grown,
That lovely child of yore.

Woman and wife was she;
Her figure was bowed and gaunt;
Her face was wan with misery,
Furrowed by toil and want.

The king turned his horse's head,
And rode to a kingdom near;
To the princess there he softly said
Fond words she blushed to hear.

THE SMART SET

She was a maiden fair,
 Young and happy and great;
 Her beauty was far beyond compare
 With that worn, white face at the gate.

The nuptials passed in state,
 The king brought home his bride,
 And the king saw none at the palace gate
 Save the fair young queen at his side.



WHY THE MESSENGER BOY RAN

JIMMY—Dat new kid seems ter be in an orful hurry.
 JERRY—Dat's all right. He ain't carryin' no message. He's goin' up to de news-stand ter git de new book about Cross-eyed Chris, de Crafty Cracksman.



ONLY THE GOOD DIE YOUNG

“PREPARE for the worst!” said Dr. Gill,
 And every voice grew hushed and still;
 Relations from far, and friends from near,
 Did crowd with a vim his words to hear.
 “Prepare for the worst!” said Dr. Gill—
 “There's plenty of life in Robert still!”

CARL BARCLAY.



ALL HOPE LOST

“BLUE! Well, I should say I am. The rich uncle, to whose property I
 was sole heir, has just——”
 “Has just what?”
 “Been converted to Mormonism.”



HIGH BALLS

“I HAVE just come off a big bat——” said the base-ball.
 “Sh,” replied the ping-pong ball; “don't give it away, but I have been
 on a little racket myself to-day.”

IN THE SHADOW OF FUJI

By Carlton Dawe

"Where Fuji-Yama rears his crest,
And tinkling bells in temples ring,
And girls are picturesquely drest,
And love is ever on the wing."

FROM the beginning of things, the mountain had been with her, a companion in her solitude, a confidant in her hour of trouble. As a child, it swayed her imagination; as a woman, it was still a predominant factor in her life. It walled her imagination, as it did her view of the world; it was the alpha and omega of life, the beginning and the end of all things. Rain, storm, snow, sunshine—all were attributed to Fuji, or to the Great White Spirit who held dominion over its cloud-capped heights. The peasants, who dwelt upon the slopes of the great mountain, told strange tales of that masterful Spirit, tales of terror, in which phantom foxes and paralyzing ghosts played an important part. And, on those stormy nights when the wind howled and shrieked across the land, Momo, her head covered with the bed-clothes, would lie quaking with fear, and murmuring to herself, "The Spirit of the Mountain is abroad, the Great White Spirit, with his pack of fierce, white foxes." And to the Supreme Deity, to the August Centre of Heaven, would she pray for courage and consolation.

She knew nothing of the life beyond the homestead, nothing of cities and the ways of worldly people. Once only had she been taken some distance from her home, and from a hilltop her conductors had shown her a wide, glistening plain, which they called *umi*, or the sea; and they told her incredible tales of great ships that came up out

of the waters, bringing strange men with hair like the sun at midday, and eyes as blue as the heaven that stretched above the crest of Fuji. But, just then, she was not capable of grasping the meaning of the sea, the great ships, or the men with sunshine in their hair. Her world was bounded by Fuji, her imagination thrallled by its imaginary attributes. Just as all good could come out of Fuji, so, likewise, could all evil, and neither by word nor thought would she offend the Master Spirit, who held dominion over the all-pervading mountain.

On the lower slopes of Fuji, perhaps a mile or more from her homestead, stood the remains of a once magnificent Shinto temple. Its construction dated back into ages of which man had no record; but that it was a relic of the days of splendor its majestic ruins bore ample testimony. In those days, Shintoism was a real, living religion, not the makeshift and apology for a dying cause. To-day, the temple was still consecrated to worship, and the ignorantly faithful still trudged up beneath the great granite *torii*, which were now a refuge-place for pigeons and other wild fowl. There they prayed, to whom they knew not, for that happiness and worldly prosperity which could never be theirs.

Hither Momo wended her way, to offer orisons at the altar of the dead gods. It is true, like all wicked people, she had her moments of doubt. If prayers were to be continually ignored, what was the use of praying? She had begun by praying for little things, but, finding modesty of no avail, she rose in her demands. The result, however,

was the same. And this was not wise of the gods, because she had not been unreasonable in her requests. Yet she could not battle with fate; such a proceeding was beyond her dreams. But there grew up in her heart an unsatisfied longing, and, when she prostrated herself before the shrine, she rendered up her soul to the abstract being, who was supposed to sit in clouds and regulate the world.

Sometimes, her mind reverted to the glittering plain which they had called the sea, and she would ask odd questions here and there of the great ships that spouted smoke and fire, and of the men with the white skin and the golden hair, who came from down under the waters. But little information was forthcoming. It was said that the men were great in stature, that they were great fighting men, and that they wandered all over the globe in search of gold. Nor did there seem anything incongruous in this, though it was evidently hurled at the white men as a sneer; for she knew how hard her own family worked for a few pieces of silver, and it seemed quite reasonable that men should go farther afield for gold.

But one day, as she climbed the mountain-side to her devotions, a strange adventure befell her. The sun had poured with an unreasonable heat upon the dusty pathway, and, when she reached the great granite steps that led directly to the temple, she paused for a moment, in the shade of one of the giant *torii*. Aloft, the pigeons cooed one to the other, and the air was full of the drowsy hum of insects. Behind her towered the mountain; before her stretched the valley, with here and there a homestead peeping out among green leaves. Beyond the valley again, hid by the farthest hill, lay the sea, and beyond that—eternity.

She sat in the shade of the great boulder, and let her gaze wander dreamily across the landscape. It had been an exhausting ascent, and her little feet, in their rough sandals, had grown sore and weary. Vague thoughts stole drowsily through her mind, and

she opened wider the bosom of her kimono, to let the air play around her neck. Her tired eyes roamed aimlessly across the wide expanse of blue, palpitating air. Then, slowly, her eyelids closed, and she fell asleep.

When she awakened, it was with the vague knowledge that she was not alone. A feeling of terror seized her, and, with a little cry, she sprang hastily to her feet, but only to drop as quickly to her knees. For there before her stood—what was it?

Her dreaming had been short; but, short as it was, she had been wafted on air to the summit of Fuji, and she was on the point of being brought before the Great White Spirit, when, of a sudden, she awoke, and behold, there she stood in the awful presence!

She cowered low on the step, and hid her face in her hand; and he who had surprised her thus was still more surprised at her extraordinary behavior.

"Pardon, my lord," she sobbed; "if I have offended, pardon."

As yet he did not understand, but he smiled, half irresolutely, at the crouching figure.

"There is nothing to pardon. Look at me, child. I shall not harm you."

The voice reassured her, and yet she had not the courage to take her hands from her eyes.

"Are you not the Spirit of the Mountain?" she asked.

"No," said he; "but you are."

Her single quick glimpse of him had revealed a figure identical with that of her dreams—a man of tall stature, with a white skin, blue eyes and golden hair. If this was not the Spirit of the Mountain, who could it be?

"Come, come," he said, in a coaxing tone, being evidently anxious to allay her fears, "I am no spirit, but a man—a stranger. I found you dreaming in the sunshine, and I stopped to look. Was it a liberty? Am I forgiven?"

Truly, this was no masterful spirit, who thus craved forgiveness from her, Momo, of whom forgiveness had never been asked before. She found it a strange sensation, with something of

delight in it, for she was a woman. And, despite her fears, there was that ineradicable feminine curiosity which so often leads the sex to the verge of destruction, if not quite over the precipice. Who was he, this stranger, and how came he to be so like the god of her dreams?

She lowered her little, dimpled hands, but for some time she would not raise her eyes. He, looking down, noted the slender column of throat, the firm flesh that sloped away beneath the wide kimono. He knew by the rise and fall of her bosom that she was agitated, and once more he hastened to relieve her fears.

"It was rude of me; I am sorry. I ought to have passed on. But you were dreaming, child, and in your dreams you looked so lovely that I was forced to stop and worship."

These were strange words, but pleasant, and her heart gave a quicker throb, and for a moment she looked up and met his admiring glance. Then, down went her lids again, and she seemed to find some object of infinite interest in the valley below.

"Look at me," he said; but she still fixed her glance on the wide-stretching valley.

"What do they call you?" he asked.

"Momo," she answered, slowly, the rich blood flushing her sweet face.

"Truly, a most appropriate name—the most luscious of fruit, the most delightful of girls. Look at me, little one. Don't be afraid. Tell me why I find you here, dreaming in the sunshine?"

Man is supposed to be a reasonable creature, and, at times, woman is not without her share of reason. Agitated as Momo was, she was more than half-conscious of the absurdity of her pose. This was neither the Great Spirit of the Mountain, nor one of his pack of spirit foxes, but a man, a veritable man, one of those white giants who came from under the sea. And, when he sat beside her and took her hand, she let it linger in his hard, wide palm, and throbbed through all her being. She looked into his eyes, and found

that they were like bits of the sky when the whole face of heaven is clear of clouds; she saw the sunbeams frolic in his hair, until it glowed like living fire.

"I was on my way to the shrine," she explained; "but the heat was great, and I grew tired."

"To pray for your sins?" he asked, with a laugh. "What sins have you?"

"Have we not all sins?"

"Truly." If it was not a sin, this look he cast on her, what was it?

"And then I dreamed of the Great Spirit, and, when I awoke, behold, you stood before me!"

"And so I might have stood forever, had you not awakened. And this Great Spirit—what of it?"

"He is king of the mountain. He brings the rain and the wind, and shakes the thunder in the skies. And often in the night-time he hunts upon the mountain with his pack of spirit foxes, and huge foxes they are, with big, red eyes and great, long tails."

"Ah! And what is he like, this spirit?"

"He is white, like you, and he has hair like yours, and eyes like yours."

"You have seen him?"

"No; but when I awoke and saw you standing there, I thought he had come to me."

So that explained her terror. He edged just a little nearer, the same amused smile on his face.

"If I were the spirit," he said, "I should seize you in my arms and bear you to my caves on the top of Fuji, and I should keep you there as my queen; and, when I hunted with my spectral pack, you should ride with me on the biggest and wooliest fox, and we would scour the mountain and the valley, and make people cover their heads with fright as they heard us hurrying by."

At this she shook her head. The picture did not please her. "I am glad you are not," she said.

"I am nothing so important," he admitted, "nothing but a wandering *Igirisu-jin*, who craves your pardon for this intrusion."

So this was an Englishman—one of the people who came from under the sea. She knew by his manner of speaking that the language was not native to him—he said so many curious things, and mispronounced so strangely. But an *Igirisu-jin*—it was wonderful!

"Sometimes I paint pictures," he continued; "I heard of this wonderful Shinto temple, and came to make a sketch of it. Blessed be the fate that led my steps hither!" he added.

It was strange that any one should come far to see the temple. She had seen it nearly every day for seventeen years, and so she told him, and expressed wonder at his enthusiasm.

"Seventeen years!" he repeated, "seventeen years!" And then he laughed and kissed her hand and helped her to her feet. "You shall be my guide," he said. "Come."

So, hand in hand, they climbed the steps beneath the great *torii*, and she pointed out each particular object of interest, and told a legend here, a superstition there; and he knelt with her before the shrine, and watched her as she offered orisons to the dead gods.

"I must paint the temple," he thought, "and I shall paint her somewhere in the foreground. But how shall I pose her so that she shall be seen in all her loveliness?" And then he knew he must paint his picture, and that the work would take days, and—and he had not come intending to stay. He spoke to her of the dilemma, and she knitted her brows and looked much perturbed. "Unless I can find a shelter," he said, "I must go away again."

The thought stabbed her like a knife. Go away! "We will find you a shelter," she said.

A priest came by at that moment, and to him they explained the situation. He shook his head. They like not strangers, these priests; but when Stamford said, "I will pay well for the accommodation," the priest discovered a vacant cell.

The sun was sinking behind a shoul-

der of the mountain, when Stamford and the girl descended the granite steps, worn very thin in places by the tired feet of countless pilgrims. But she no longer stood off from him in terror. His arm was about her, his hand held her two hands, and, now and again, he would stop suddenly, look into her eyes, and then, being unable to bear the clear, frank expression which he found there, would close them with kisses.

"To-morrow, Momo!" he whispered.

"To-morrow, O my lord!"

And, on the morrow, she trudged upward, and he posed her, and made a pretense of painting her portrait; but the fever was in his eyes, and his hand shook as with palsy.

A week passed, and still another week, and, at length, he knew that he must go. But she had grown very dear to him, and he a thousandfold dearer to her. What was he to do; how break the news? He had not ventured to breathe a word of parting, and she had not even dreamed of it. And now, when he had determined upon the act, he knew not how to begin. For, in her heart, she had set up a shrine, and within its holiest of holies she had placed his image. And there she knelt to the real, living god, at last, no longer an abstract theory, a potential wonder, but one who swayed her, sleeping and waking, one in whom was the essence of life.

And yet this parting had to be, and he blamed himself for submitting to a moment of madness. Did he know what would happen? Did he know what the end would be? In a way, yes; but this end was not quite what he had foreseen. Of course, it could not go on forever; that she must have known as well as he. Perhaps, vaguely, some such thought had come to her at times, but, if so, she had put it away with a smile. How could he, being so happy, forsake his happiness? As upon her the sun showered warmth and joy, so must he be a partaker of her happiness.

Stamford laid claim to no particular heroic qualities. If he was no better

than the rest of mankind, he certainly believed that he was no worse; at least, he had believed so up to this point. But it was the pathetic, trusting look of her brown eyes that laid bare the ignominy of his conduct. If only she would not look at him, or if she would not look at him in such a way!

That morning he had said to himself: "I will go to-morrow. I must go." Yet, when she came, bringing him fresh fruit and milk from the village below, and when she looked at him with all her soul in her eyes, his courage faltered. If, in the midst of his passion, he had behaved cruelly, callously, he was neither cruel nor callous enough to smite her down in cold blood. Yet, all day, the thought was with him, for it had to be, and, if she failed to notice his restraint, it was because her love admitted of no suspicion.

It was later than usual when they walked down beneath the great *torii*. His arm was about her, and she, as if anticipating danger, clung closer to his side.

"The picture is finished, Momo," he said.

She sighed. "My lord has made me very beautiful."

"But not so beautiful as thou art, O my dream! When I go to Tokio, I will have it set in the best frame the city can produce."

She caught a trip, a sound, a hesitancy in his tone which startled her.

"My lord will go to Tokio?"

"Surely, now that the work is finished."

"But he will come back?"

He pressed her to him, and, as if to avoid that awful, appealing look, gazed far out across the fast-darkening valley.

"I will come back," he said. But he shuddered, for it was a lie he uttered, and in his soul he knew it. Yet, was it kind, or was it cruel, thus to lie? He could not say, but he meant it in kindness. "She will look for me for a week, a month—and then!" But this thought brought

not the consolation he desired. He pressed a roll of notes into her hand.

"What is this, my lord?" she said.

"Money," he answered, guiltily, feeling more like a coward than he had ever felt in his life.

"But, my lord, I do not wish money."

"It may be useful," was all he could say; "keep it." And, almost roughly, he pressed it into the bosom of her dress, and she, poor child, seized his rough hand, and carried it to her lips.

Early the next morning, she climbed the steps to the temple, but he was gone. She reached his cell, she sat where they had sat, she walked where they had walked. But a great loneliness seemed suddenly to have fallen upon the earth, and, when she looked up at Fuji, even the great mountain was frowning.

With a heavy heart, she retraced her steps down the valley, though his promise that he would return shone like a beacon through the gloom. She never dreamed of doubting him; she would not so wrong her illustrious lord. It was sad, this separation, that was all; but he would come again, as he had said, and then the earth would bloom again, and even Fuji would forget to frown.

But he came no more. The days sped one after another; the weeks ran into months, but he came not. Every day, at the self-same hour, she climbed to the great *torii*, and sat where he had first discovered her, a step doubly consecrated in her memory, and still the wished-for vision never came. "He has not forgotten," she moaned. "He could not forget! He is ill—dead!" And she shuddered at the thought. If he were dead! Well, she, too, could die. It would be an easy matter. But, if he were not dead, and one day he were to come back, and she not there to greet him——!

Little by little, the neighbors learned her story and mocked her, saying, "Behold, she climbs the clouds for her phantom lover!"

Phantom lover, forsooth! And she had held him in her arms, and felt his breath against her neck, his heart-beat close to hers! She went on her way with stern, set face. These people were of the earth. Unlike her, they had never lived in the clouds.

Then, there came a time when she was no longer strong enough to climb the hill, and she now found the first use for his money, in bribing another to undertake the journey. And then, after a time, she was daily seen mounting the path once more, only now she carried a baby on her back. And the neighbors laughed louder than ever, and, when they looked into the wonderful blue eyes of the child, they laughed still more. But she only pressed it closer to her breast, and cooed rapturously over it, as mothers will, and told it of the golden-haired one, who came to her in a dream, and prophesied the dawning of a glorious day.

But that day never dawned. When the child grew ill, she said to herself:

"He will come now; he must know." When the child died, she sent a broken-hearted wail up to the stars. But Fuji still frowned, unpityingly; the stars were cold, and silent, and far off. "Now I am alone," she said; "his heart will tell him that I am alone, and he will come back to me."

But he did not come.

Winter and Summer saw her trudging the path that led up to the temple, and she always sat on the one particular step, and always looked in the same direction across the valley. "For it was here he found me," she would say to herself, "and here he shall find me when he comes."

But still he did not come.

One black, Winter morning, as a priest ascended the great granite steps, he almost stumbled against a human body that was doubled up in the snow. He touched it; it was frozen stiff. He turned it over.

Momo had kept her last vigil



DEVIL LORE

HOW strangely words and phrases of the day
Combine to please the mental appetite;
It made me smile to hear Myrtilla say:
"The Imp o'Darkness can't be impolite."



"ARE you fond of sports, Mrs. Wheatpit?"
"I ought to be; I married one."



"HOW long were you in Boston?"
"Long enough to think in six syllables, and to acquire five new religions."

ETOILE DU SOIR

Par le Vicomte J. de Beaufort

LA DOUCE volupté du soir mélancolique,
T'en souvient-il?—s'était alanguie en nos yeux
Où déjà la lueur incertaine des cieux
Pâlissait aux clartés d'une étoile idyllique.

La pure étoile, à peine éclore au firmament,
Dès son premier rayon chercha ton front d'aimée,
Sure d'y recueillir la caresse embaumée
Que la fleur vespérale exhale en s'endormant.

T'en souvient-il? Cette ombre heureuse et transparente
Où nous errions émus d'un silence plus vrai
Que tous les mots brûlants d'un amour enivré,
En sens-tu la tiédeur encore pénétrante?

Revois-tu le sentier, les feuilles, l'or éteint
Du couchant, les reflets d'horizon sur la terre,
Et tout autour de nous qui rêvions, le mystère
De la nuit vaporeuse apparue au lointain?

Et pourquoi mon regard s'éclaira d'une extase,
Où mon cœur s'étonnait d'aimer jusqu'à pleurer?
Et pourquoi je voulus, sans pouvoir, murmurer
Je ne sais quelle indifférente et vaine phrase.

Cependant que ma voix en un sanglot mourait,
T'en souvient-il? Te souviens tu de cette larme?
Et pourquoi ton sourire eut alors tant de charme,
Lorsque son chaste aveu s'unit à mon secret?

Et pourquoi tu levas tes yeux vers une étoile
Qui pût garder pour nous, à travers tous les temps,
Cette heure que depuis aucun soleil ne voile,
T'en souvient-il toujours, comme moi qui t'attends?

Que de jours ont vécu! mais l'étoile est la même;
Il n'est point de passé pour moi, si j'ai su voir
La tendresse de qui j'ai reçu tout espoir;
Je vis en un présent éternel, puisque j'aime!

Puisque j'aime, tout vit pour moi de ton amour;
Je te revois partout et comme au premier jour,
Souriante et scellant en mon cœur la promesse.
Qui renferme un baiser d'immortelle jeunesse!

A LUCKLESS LOVER

I BROKE it off with Anna Long—
 She was too short, you see;
 With Mabel Wright things all went wrong,
 We never could agree;
 Then there was awkward Mary Blue,
 Who was so very green;
 And Bessie Goode would never do,
 Because she was so mean.

It couldn't last with Jennie Read,
 Because she wouldn't write;
 And, after just one day, I freed
 Myself from Nellie Knight;
 I soon concluded that Miss Crewe
 Must seek another mate;
 And gave up Edith Early, too,
 Because she came down late.

Miss Wood possessed an iron will;
 Miss Gay was always sad;
 Miss Sharp could see the point, but still
 She said my jokes were bad;
 Miss Rich was destitute of "tin";
 Too melting was Miss Frost;
 In earnest, then, I wooed Miss Winn,
 And—same old luck!—I lost!

FRANK ROE BATCHELDER.



AND SO IT DID

HE (*prominent novelist*)—I have been working ten hours a day for the last ten years.

SHE—I should think it would tell on you.
 "It does speak volumes."



A LAST RESORT

BELLE—And she married for love?

LENA—Yes. It was the best she could do.

AMERICAN WOMEN AND AMERICAN MEN

By the Viscount de Santo-Thyrso

SOON after the Spanish-American war, I happened to read a provincial Spanish paper which abused, in most outrageous terms, poor Christopher Columbus, as the primary cause of the defeat of the Spanish arms. I am afraid that many mothers of marriageable daughters in Europe have a like grudge against the Genoese sailor who discovered America. Undoubtedly, one of the charms of American girls is rooted in their fathers' capacity for making money; this, however, is only one of their attractions, and it appeals but to wise young men. Now, men are seldom wise; if they are so before thirty, it is an infirmity.

What makes the American girl a most attractive being is her self-confidence, amiability and good temper. Now, I am not a flatterer, and I must say that pretty women are as much in the minority in the United States as in any other country. Beauty, like gold, is scarce everywhere. You can find more gold in California than in Europe; but even in California you certainly find more dross than gold. So it is with women. In some places, or in some countries, the number of pretty women is greater than in others, and in this branch of natural production the United States is not behind-hand. This, however, is only a foreigner's view of the subject. To tell the truth, I have never met an American girl of twenty who did not consider herself fascinating; this is self-confidence; and for a woman to believe she is beautiful is half-way to real beauty. In the first place, a plain woman, who is aware of her

plainness, is unhappy. Man is a selfish animal, and, despite what novels say about sad women and the power of tears, unhappiness is as repellent to a healthy mind as disease to a healthy body. Then, the conscious plain woman gives up every thought of pleasing, and, therefore, she does nothing to make herself attractive. She does not dress in a becoming way, she does not smile, she does not try to be attractive. She becomes sour or dull, or both.

On the other hand, a plain woman, who thinks herself pretty, expects to please. She exerts herself to do so, and taxes her dressmaker and her milliner to show off her good points. She tries to be witty, gay, mirthful—in a word, to be attractive; and, the limited politeness and the unlimited conceit of the other sex helping, she is probably happy. She may, indeed, never find a husband, but that is another story. Hope, however, will last longer than youth, so she will try to please long after there is any demand for it. In this way, we find in the American girl a worldly expression of the three theological virtues: Faith in her charms; Hope to find a husband; and, let us call it Charity, a sweet virtue that by itself can easily lead us to the realization of our Hope.

The American girl believes not only in herself, but in the great sisterhood of American girls. Let it be said in her honor that I never met an American girl who did not praise her friends—a most uncommon proceeding among the fair sex in other lands. I suppose it was the girls who invented the first trust in America, a trust to invade the

matrimonial markets of the world, in the teeth of foreign competition. At any rate, the kindness of American girls to one another is one of the sweetest peculiarities of their character.

The American woman considers herself the equal of man in a few things, and his superior in everything else. This superiority is not contested by her countrymen. Nowhere have I seen a greater reverence for women than in the United States. The rights of womanhood are an addition to, not a substitute for, the rights of manhood. In fact, the attitude of the men toward the women in America is more than chivalrous. They look up to their womankind.

The men keep but one privilege for themselves: that of making money. For a long time, I wondered whether, in the eyes of American men, women were idols or regarded as objects of luxury. They are neither; they are the uncontested rulers of society. Here is one of the characteristics of the American mind: it attends to its own business and nothing else. Now, society is the women's business. Any American man may dream of ruling the United States, including Hawaii, Porto Rico and the Philippines; but not one will ever dream of ruling his own house, even to the exclusion of the kitchen and the laundry. This summarizes the difference between the two sexes, for many American women not only rule their homes, but aim also at ruling their country. These are the intellectual women.

Intellectualism in America is a profession, not a tendency or a taste. An intellectual woman talks about nothing but the loftiest subjects. If you take such a woman to dinner, you may be sure to have higher education served with the terrapin, and the franchise of women with the canvas-back duck. The duck may be a black-head, and the terrapin chicken bones, but you are sure to get the real article in education and franchise. When you find yourself in such a plight, the only thing I can advise is, "genteel intoxication."

The fact that society is the women's department in American life accounts for their social accomplishments being far superior to those of the men. In America, a man who can talk—in the ordinary sense of the word—is almost as much of a rarity as a woman who can be silent. A man may be able to discuss the most serious matters, or to lecture on a most interesting subject, but he cannot chat. The trouble is that he makes a business of everything he does, and cares for no other business. Even his pleasures he enjoys so thoroughly and conscientiously that they become matters of business. The profit may be enjoyment instead of money, but he takes as much trouble to get the largest amount of enjoyment out of his exertions as he would to get the largest sum of money out of a business dealing. When you see an American golf-player, you think that he is looking for his dinner in the holes on the links. You pass, on the road, an American amateur cyclist, and you are led to believe that his daily bread depends on his arriving at his destination within a certain time. Not at all; he is simply enjoying himself. He exhausts his pleasure, although it seems more probable that his pleasure will exhaust him.

Naturally, if two men, having the same fad or the same profession, are thrown together, they are sure to be charming to each other. But, if men of different professions and hobbies foregather, they take refuge in telling stories. Now, ordinarily, there is no pleasure in listening to a story; the pleasure is in telling it. More than once, I have been thrown with half-a-dozen charming, witty club-men, gathered about a table, sipping cocktails and telling most amusing stories. The speaker, with a beaming face and a merry twinkle in his eyes, expatiates on the details, shapes his periods, prepares his effects, makes you long for the final point. Meanwhile, his hearers are longing for the end, regardless of the point. They are nervous and abstracted, with anxious looks and haggard faces, they are thinking all the

time of the story they are going to tell, and how they are going to tell it. It would seem more reasonable for each of them to tell his story aloud to himself, in the solitude of his bedroom. But man is naturally a gregarious animal, and, as one cannot enjoy one's cigar in the darkness, one would find no flavor in one's story in solitude.

Foreigners used to say that in America the woman is superior to the man. The fact is that foreigners regard Americans only from the social point of view. As the women rule the social and the men the business world, the American woman is naturally a superior social being to the American man. She is the soul of society. She makes its rules. That is why there is no society in the world where so much respect is shown to women.

There is one matter of common interest to both sexes, one that, in fact, requires their mutual coöperation—this is, love. When you see a young woman and a young man talking together, they are probably flirting. Old men seldom mix with the fair sex. But, even during the most desperate flirtation, each party keeps to its *spécialité*: society or business. The girl does all the talking, and the man most of the kissing.

The result of this state of affairs is that the sexes do not amalgamate. In Europe, woman is always dependent on man. She is nothing by herself. She is an adjective, while man is a noun. The noun can exist by itself, but an adjective without a substantive is a meaningless, silly thing. Girls in Europe are adjectives on the lookout for nouns; not so in America, where spinsters have a status of their own. The old maid, such as she is in Europe, does not exist in America. I have met in America a number of charming unmarried ladies, who, in Europe, would have *coiffé Sainte Catherine* long ago, and still they keep delightful houses, they receive their friends, give elegant parties, and are invited everywhere. They are as much courted as young women would be. They are not in the least priggish.

And, when they grow older, they are much more independent than men. An old maid usually lives by herself. I hardly know an old bachelor in America who does not seek the shade of a petticoat, which may hang from a sister, a niece or a cousin, to cover the chair opposite to him at the dinner-table.

This spirit of independence in woman gives her the royal grace with which she receives the homage of her male friends. She is not beseeching or grateful. She may go out of her way to fascinate a recalcitrant man, but her idea is to subjugate, to conquer—not to surrender. I have known several American Don Juans. They were all in petticoats. The male Don Juan would be ostracized by public opinion, in a society dominated by the feminine element. I have met a few rakes, but the women avoid them—at least, in public—and style them compromising men. Now, in Europe, there are some women who are compromising and some who are not, but every man between twenty and fifty is necessarily compromising.

This is the natural consequence of the fact that the rules of society in America are made by the women, while in Europe they are made by the men. You cannot do away with the antagonism between the sexes. Woman can never be the equal of man; she has to be either his superior or his inferior. In Africa, the woman works, and the man rules; in Europe, the man both works and rules; in America, the man works, and the woman rules. Women are the ruling class, the aristocracy of America.

The American women have not the useful qualities of the sterner sex, but they have more of the agreeable ones. They are less energetic, but more refined. They cannot make money, but they are unrivaled for spending it. If the man is coal, the woman is diamond.

Every woman in America is prepared to be a princess. She knows that she can become one, while her brother's chances of ever being a real

prince are infinitely smaller. Of course, I know what unmingled contempt true Americans have for princes and that sort of thing; nor is it their fault, if their pedigrees connect them with the crowned heads of Europe. This is so common that I have some misgivings whether there be any legitimate dynasty left in Europe. However, the fact remains, that, while the woman acquires aristocratic graces by a careful social education, the man prepares himself to fight the battles of life as a shrewd man of business, a hard and useful worker.

Nowhere have I noted a greater divergency of views than between the two sexes in America. As a rule, in American homes, the wife takes no interest in the husband's business, nor the husband in the wife's. The husband's business is to provide the ways and means, to open an account, and to write cheques. The wife attends to the social duties of the family. She makes her home attractive, she calls on her friends, she has a day at home. She occupies herself with the social account, and pays not only her own, but her husband's social debts.

The husband gets up in the morning, and goes out to his business. At nine or ten o'clock, he is at his office. At four or five o'clock, his work is over. I mean it, literally. The men in America follow Saint Augustine's precept, *age quod agis*—do what you are doing. They care for nothing but business from nine in the morning till four in the afternoon. From four in the afternoon until nine in the morning there is no such thing as business, for them. They change their thoughts with their clothes. As long as they wear a business-suit—that is what they call their tweeds—their minds are occupied with business thoughts. When the husband is through with his business for the day, the wife begins with hers, unless she has already had a luncheon party, attended exclusively by women. At four o'clock, if it is not her day at home, the wife has to consume several cups of tea

at the houses of friends; she pays her dinner calls, she returns other people's visits; in a word, she performs her social tasks. The husband, in the meantime, having nothing to do with teas—unless, perchance, he is in the tea trade, in which case he regards such functions with favor—goes to his club, in order to relax his mind by telling his stories over a sociable mint-julep or a Manhattan cocktail; then he goes home to take his wife out to dinner. At dinner, of course, the only person he cannot sit by is his wife. Late in the evening, the pair go home, *en tête-à-tête*, for the first time during the whole day. I suppose the late arrival at home precludes an interchange of views between husband and wife. As they rarely lunch together, they never quarrel. When they do happen to lunch together, as they sometimes do on Sundays, no difference of opinion can possibly arise, for they never consider the same subject. The wife chats, the husband rests. She is very fond of him, he is very proud of her. She is very happy that he can make all the money she wishes to spend, and he blesses her for knowing how to spend all the money he can make.

I never saw an American woman cross. I may have seen one angry, but never cross. The men, on the other hand, may be rough, or even rude, but they are never unkind. With a bright temper and a kind heart, things should go on smoothly.

When American girls marry Europeans, it is curious to note the adaptability of those girls. I have known several American women, married in England, who have adapted themselves so thoroughly to their new surroundings that, as an American friend of mine used to say, they have overdone it. They are so extremely English that one familiar with this phenomenon will divine, at once, that they are American.

The first thing they change is their idea of propriety. But, then, I must say that, in America, I am always at a loss as to what is, and what is not,

proper. For instance, I could drive out in the country, or go bicycling, with a girl, and nobody would blame me, or her, for it. But it would be improper to take her to a restaurant for luncheon. All is well as long as you starve. As eating is not an improper thing in itself, and eating in public is considered, according to the circumstances, either a fashionable thing to do, or a trial to go through, I do not really see the point. Now, I would much rather that a young girl of my family should dine with a young man, say, in the palm-room of the Waldorf-Astoria, than that she should go driving with a judge of the supreme court. For, in the first hypothesis, I should know where she was; while, in the second, the Lord only would know, and none but the judge could tell.

According to the American ideas of propriety, a woman may take a man in her victoria, and drive with him anywhere but to the door of his club. Propriety is always a matter of convention; but much more in America than in other countries. In Europe, most ideas of propriety come from the former state of servitude in which women were held. While gradually freeing them, men have made certain rules, to be observed in the every-day intercourse of the two sexes. These rules have been modified, but some restrictions still prevail that seem absurd, and, to more broad-minded people, an outrage upon the dignity of womanhood. These rules are remnants of the past, like the wig of the lord-chancellor, or the regulations of an inauguration ball. But, in America, where the social, if not the political, emancipation of woman is a fact, there is no room for anything of the kind. The women themselves make the rules of propriety, and they do it with that logic and precision that are the characteristics of the sex. The men obey the women-made mandates, deportment being under the jurisdiction of the social court; and, in the end, it makes absolutely no difference.

If the self-confidence of the American man is more aggressive than that

of his countrywoman, he still possesses a quality that makes him very attractive—sincerity. Whatever he does, he does in earnest—he always means it. This accounts for his wonderful success, both individual and national. The American believes in the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon race, especially of the variety that is produced on his side of the water; he believes in the star-spangled banner, in the American Constitution, in his public schools, in the fertility of his soil, in the beauty of his sisters, in the wisdom of his rulers, and in the real existence of his ancestors. He believes in himself and in everything American, and his faith has moved mountains. He is always right in *believing*, although, now and then, he believes in the wrong thing.

The remark I have made before, that the American is a specialist, does not mean that he cannot change his specialty. On the contrary, his adaptability is a wonderful thing. You take any of a hundred journalists, place him at the head of an important public bureau, and the work of that bureau is always excellent. The official publications of the United States are the most interesting and contain the most reliable information of any I have ever read.

The most striking instance of this adaptability happened during the Spanish-American war, four years ago. A certain cavalry regiment was raised by one of the most distinguished living men in the United States, who is, at the same time, one of the most remarkable personalities I have ever met in my wandering life. That man, who is as sensible as he is bold and energetic, declined the colonelcy of his regiment, because, being a civilian, he thought he had not the proper qualifications for leading a regiment without undergoing some training in the military profession. The Government had to select another man; but, having no soldier available, and considering that the business of a cavalry regiment is wholesale slaughter, it appointed a doctor. Now, this doctor proved to be, as

the circumstances required, a distinguished soldier, an able politician and a remarkable administrator. He fought like a veteran, too, and made a new country. I am sure that he was a good doctor; afterward, he was successively, a good soldier and a good organizer, as he happened to have good brains. He dropped his former specialty, medicine, in order to adopt a new one; but to this one he devoted himself, soul and body, and he remained a specialist, although in another line.

Every American thinks that his work is the pivot on which the universe turns. The universe, of course, is the United States, with a few accessories, such as Europe, Asia, the moon and the sun. It was necessary to have Europe, so that the United States might be discovered, and Asia is highly convenient as a market for the overproduction of American industry. Moreover, it was most considerate of Providence to provide the sun and the moon, until the United States could spare the time to discover the uses of electricity for illuminating purposes.

When a man has a strong belief in his work, he does it honestly and thoroughly. That is the way in which every American man performs his task, however humble and uninteresting it may be. The faith the Americans have in their work gives a sort of idealism to their otherwise practical natures. This idealism is one of the most startling features of the American mind. They are sentimental, too, and, in most of their actions, you will find a puzzling mixture of sentimental and practical motives. They know right and wrong; between the two, they can conceive no compromise. They do not acknowledge the existence of that easy, well-paved road that weak and well-meaning mankind has laid out between these two absolute principles. Everything that is not good is bad. They cannot understand that a thing can be neither good nor bad, but simply convenient. Therefore, their ideas are often absurdly theoretical; but they carry them out with the most

practical common sense. They do not pay the least attention to circumstances or surroundings; they set down a principle, as they lay out on paper the plan of a city. They make a law according to the principle, and the circumstances must adapt themselves to the law. The city is built according to the rectilinear plan that was drawn beforehand, and that plan must be complied with, in spite of opposing circumstances. This strange idealism, that takes no notice of material accidents, is a formidable power. It is childish; but it would be a serious matter to oppose a child that possessed the strength of a giant. One of the forms of this childishness is the faith of Americans in their leaders. The docility of an American crowd is surprising. They pretend to choose their leaders; and, once chosen, they obey them without the slightest resistance. An American enters a restaurant, and he almost invariably takes the table that the head-waiter gives him. I suppose he would consider it unconstitutional and revolutionary to take another.

A common characteristic in both men and women in America is that they do not care for money. The men like to make money, and the women delight in spending it. Money is to them what the cup, not the wine, is to the drinker. Any American girl would marry a poor young man, but she expects him to make all the money she needs. She will cheerfully rise with him. And, according to his means, she will spend, with the same dash, either two thousand or two millions of dollars. The man, as a rule, does not care to spend a farthing; whether he has two thousand or two millions of dollars, he will work just the same. His pleasure consists in handling the money, and in undertaking gigantic combinations. He regards dollars in the same way that horse-breeders regard stallions; not for riding purposes, but for reproduction.

My stay in the United States has upset all my economic ideas. I have

realized that individual thrift does not add to the national wealth. Money must be made and spent; so that, after all, women play as large a part as men, as regards the national wealth of the country. They are important factors in American prosperity, and I hope that the most flippant of American girls will be glad to know that she is the necessary complement of some laborious man. A centre of production is worth nothing without a correspondent centre of consumption.

The type I have attempted to describe is the real American man or woman, not the New Yorker or the Bostonian. In the large eastern cities people are more in touch with the external world and with European ideas. The national character is, therefore, lost, or very much modified, particularly, in the upper classes. The same thing happens in every country. You do not expect to find the real Spaniard in Madrid, or the real Russian in St. Petersburg. In such centres the inhabitants acquire, as in New York, a thick varnish of cosmopolitanism. Of course, if you scratch the New York fashionable or the refined Bostonian, you will find the American, as you find the Cossack beneath the Russian. But it is not the custom to scratch the people you meet.

Of my New York friends, very few have traveled westward; most of them have not been even as far as Washington, although they have crossed the ocean at least a score of times. This shows that New York is nearer to Europe than to San Francisco or Chicago. Indeed, New Yorkers have shaved off Uncle Sam's goatee. They have not lost the sterling quali-

ties of their race, but they have dropped some of its peculiarities and most of its external marks.

I should really be very sorry if, by some lamentable misunderstanding, my criticism were taken in an unfriendly spirit. Nowhere have I found more kind and true hospitality than in the United States. In no other country save my own can I boast of having more or better friends. Besides, I think the strength of the American people lies almost as much in their weaknesses as in their virtues. I have heard them called *green*: trees must be green to be fruitful. I myself have called them childish: it is only children who grow; it is only children or fools who are always honest and earnest, but fools do not grow. And I have no patience with fools, but I am ridiculously fond of children and of the United States.

I am afraid that these explanations are necessary to my American readers, for I know their susceptibility, due to their intense patriotism. Patriotism, for them, is a religion. For their country, they will sacrifice everything; in fact, they have done it more than once. Patriotism is the only fanaticism in America. It enters into the details of every-day life. The Stars and Stripes are more than a national emblem, they are a religious symbol. The American Constitution is the Koran of these believers, and I am not quite sure that there is not written somewhere in it: *Only the United States are great and George Washington is their prophet.*

But, if not in the Constitution, the sentence is written on the hearts of Americans, and I like them the better for it.



POSSESSION IS NINE POINTS

THE FRIEND—Well, Bobbie, are you holding your own in your classes?
BOBBIE—I suppose so; I've been at the foot six months.

CERTAIN FRAGMENTS OF KAMAL

IF I have naught to fear, to guard, beware,
 Why I speak truth and laugh and do not care;
 But having much to lose, to keep, defy,
 Am I to blame who chain Love with a lie?

This is the sadness of Life's tragedies,
 That, looking back on them with wiser eyes,
 The dignity that draped them, falling, shows
 At best a little comedy of woes.

Who lies to many, tells the truth to one,
 May find how swift the sands of Justice run;
 The many trust him whom he would deceive;
 Who hears the truth alone will not believe.

Yea, I would love to-day, could I be sure
 That through the years the potion would endure;
 But, lo! I dread that hour when I must quaff
 Wisdom, and turn to wonder—and to laugh.

Nay, kill not Love with one blunt truth, for then
 Bitter his death and swift as lives of men;
 Let him die slowly, as a great hate dies,
 On the sweet poison of exquisite lies.

McCREA PICKERING.



THE FRIENDLY SHADOWS OF NIGHT

OLD CRUSTEIGH—How did you dare, sir, to kiss my daughter last night
 on the dark piazza?

YOUNG GAYBOY—Gad, now that I've seen her by daylight, I wonder
 myself.



TESTIMONIAL

THANKSGIVING DAY, 12 M.

DEAR SIR:

I have used one bottle of your anti-fat, and do not hesitate to say that
 the glorious medicine has saved my life.

Yours gratefully,
 T. URKEY.

THE MAXIMS OF METHUSELAH

BEING THE ADVICE GIVEN BY THE PATRIARCH IN HIS NINE-HUNDRED, SIXTY-AND-NINTH YEAR, TO HIS GREAT-GRANDSON SHEM, ON THE LATTER'S TWENTIETH BIRTHDAY

By Gelett Burgess

MY son, attend unto my wisdom, and bow thine ear to my understanding.

2 So that thou mayest regard discretion, and that thy lips may win praise of women, and the joys of *thy* life be many.

3 When thou goest *she* will gladly receive thee: and when thou flirtest thou shalt not stumble;

4 For the days of my life are nine-hundred, sixty-and-nine years, and I have seen much women.

5 ¶My son, I counsel thee, introduce not female contemporaries, one to another: verily, keep thy loves apart, lest their wrath kindleth.

6 Make no manner of personal remark to a woman, unless peradventure thou wisheth to hear it misquoted in thine ears for seventy and seven years withal;

7 Forget in no wise to speak of *her* new raiment; but remember also *her* attire of yore.

8 Tell not thy previous loves to a woman, lest she also tell thee hers;

9 See that thou givest a woman her way: gainsay her in nothing; howbeit if thou robbest the victory of all material advantages, the rest will content her.

10 Wouldst thou become acquainted with a damsel? See that thou havest a secret with her straightway.

11 ¶Who can find a consistent woman? Where is *she* who spitteth not secrets in *her* wrath?

12 For behold, a nineteen-inch waist is better than a high forehead: *and* harmony is better than honesty.

13 The young damsel yearneth for chivalry: but the matron desireth impertinence;

14 And no woman hurrieth in answering a *question*.

15 ¶My son, wouldst thou know women? Incline thine ear unto my sayings;

16 She is like the stone on the hill-side, difficult to be moved;

17 Yet once started and she goeth fast and far: and no man knoweth the end thereof.

18 She believeth that all men are vain and easily to be flattered;

19 Suffer her this belief *that* she may discover to thee her cunning: and her ways *shall* be made plain.

20 Her heart is older than her head: yea, her emotion is the mother of her reason.

21 She remembereth anniversaries, even to the day thereof: and by your memory shall your love be measured.

22 When she is least sure, then is she most decided: and a stubborn woman is oft times mistaken.

23 She desireth *many things*, and is happy till she gets *them*.

24 Two things she holdeth dear: mystery and mastery.

25 *She* holdeth a comely youth is one who knoweth it not: and a subtle man is one who provideth her with excuses;

26 *Two things* she cannot resist in a man: sentiment, because she hath it in store, and honesty, because she hath none of it;

27 She jesteth not at love until her heart be broken: and an un-

married woman getteth much experience.

28 My son, wouldst thou flatter women? Observe my wisdom and be not afraid *with sudden fear*. For a woman is a foolish conundrum, having no answer.

29 Talk seriously with a silly damsel: but with a wise virgin mayest thou be light-minded;

30 Compliment a silly maiden upon her wisdom: and the ancient matron thou shalt call by her given name;

31 For I give thee good doctrine: for-sake not my law.

32 ¶ Unless she telleth *thee* all *she knoweth*, the uttermost love is not in her, and she will escape *thee* privily;

33 When she giveth *thee* many reasons *for not doing what she listeth*, lo, she can be persuaded.

34 When she ceaseth calling thee by thy name, be on thy guard; *for this is the end of formality*.

35 If she leadeth thee on to talk of thyself, she hath one of two motives withal: admiration or contempt.

36 Judge not a woman's beauty by the back of her head, lest the wise man scorn thee.

37 ¶ A flattering deed is worth more than many compliments: and a pleasing letter worketh wonders;

38 Two kinds of women there be who smoke cigarettes: she who wisheth to, and she who wisheth *two*.

39 Some women lie to themselves, and some to others: few there be who do both.

40 Until she sendeth *thee* these words, Three letters have I written thee and burned them with fire, *for my heart misgave me*, thou hast not yet won her;

41 She who is engaged to thee should have none other engagements.

42 My son, ere thou takest to thyself a wife, engage her in a game of poker: *and much shall be revealed*.

43 ¶ Hear the instruction of a lover, and attend to know understanding, for of women have I known upward of five hundred in the days of my youth and my fame was in the land.

44 If thou wouldst be a judge of women, the worst as well as the best must thou know;

45 And the woman who wottest least is even as she whose heart is blackest: and the angel and the devil are as sisters, to one without knowledge;

46 For innocence and wickedness are not to be distinguished one from another save by experience.



THE RIVAL

SHE gave to him no eagerness
Of smile or glance, no swift, sweet note
Of welcoming—or, having less,
I would have leapt upon his throat.

Striving, we won but smile for smile,
To each her fragrant finger-tips
A calculated instant—while
We famished for her lips, her lips!

Now—whisper but his name to her,
Her tender eyes grow wistful, wide;
The laces at her bosom stir—
Curse him, he died!

ETHEL M. KELLEY.

THE HEART'S UNBURDENING

By Edwin Biorkman

“WHY, Mr. Laborde! I call this a rare pleasure.”

Stopping at the top of the wide stairway that led from the veranda to the lawn in front of the hotel, she turned half-around to extend her gloveless right hand to a slender, gray-haired man who had just stepped aside to let her pass, and now stood waiting with bent, uncovered head. His attitude showed traces of embarrassment. At her words, he raised a pair of pale-blue eyes, of the kind that seem all softness until they unexpectedly turn hard and cold as polished steel. He took the offered hand, and held it in his own for a little while.

“As pretty as ever,” he murmured, gazing wistfully at its creamy whiteness. “It reminds me of some flower—some very sweet and delicate flower—”

The hand was quickly drawn back, and its owner remarked, with a slight touch of irony, “As gallant as ever.”

The deep veranda was full of people, some dozing in arm-chairs, others chatting or looking languidly out over the wide sweep of sea, on which white sails glistened brightly in the cold morning sunlight; but nobody happened to be near the spot where these two had met.

They remained immovable, while each one stared into the other's face, as if trying to find there some reflections of what had once been. The man broke the silence first.

“It is wonderful how little you have changed, in spite of—”

“Twenty years,” she filled out, when he paused. “Twenty years! twenty years!” she repeated, a moment later;

then, with a strange smile, half-mocking, half-sad:

“We have grown old in the meantime, Mr. Laborde.”

“Not you,” he protested, eagerly; and instinctively he let his eyes glide along the soft curves of her figure, a figure lithe as a girl's and yet possessing the fullness of maturity.

“I am forty,” she said, “or almost that much. And you——?”

“Fifty,” muttered the man, looking down, as if ashamed of the confession.

“You also have fared well at the hands of the great ravager, Time,” she said, eying him critically. “A little gray at the top——”

“Age didn't do that,” he remarked, pointedly.

Her finger was raised in warning. “The same old fault! You still take yourself and the whole world, but especially yourself, too seriously. As I was going to say, a little gray at the top, but still erect, still slender, still handsome, and undoubtedly——” her tone froze—“still a great favorite.”

“Of course,” he agreed, the color on his cheeks deepening, perceptibly.

She imitated his tone. “Of course!” Then, with a tap of her foot and turning partially away from him, “You are married?”

A barely audible, “No,” escaped his lips.

She turned full on him again, with a surprised “Why?”

“I think you are married,” was his only reply.

Her turn to blush had come, and she bit her under lip, as if provoked. At last, she shook her head. “I have been,” she whispered.

Something like a shock passed through the man. When he spoke again, each word seemed to be forced out with great difficulty. "And your—are your—children here?"

"I have none."

A long silence ensued. Wide-eyed, lost to her surroundings, she gazed at the ocean. He kept his eyes turned down, as if in fear that they might betray some emotion that stirred within him.

"Perhaps," he ventured, finally, "I don't know—perhaps, I am keeping you away from your friends?"

No reply came; and he did not break in again upon her revery. Both seemed to have forgotten the present entirely, while giving themselves up to contemplation of the past.

A large, white butterfly came fluttering toward them in zigzag flight, intoxicated, it might be thought, by the glory of the Summer morning, the sunshine and the flowers on the lawn that burned in rainbow colors. It caught her eye. As one waking with a dream still impressed on the mind, she put her hand up to her forehead. Then she pointed at the bright-winged little creature, now floating so near the ground that it seemed to be painted on the lawn's rich green.

"The soul of the past," she murmured.

He looked up; his face darkened a little, and he asked, "Did the past have a soul?"

"Ask, rather, if it had a heart," she retorted, almost harshly.

"Did it?" he demanded, his eyes searching hers.

"I think so." Her glance was held captive by his, until she shook herself free, with an effort which drove back into their graves all the dreams that had been haunting her. Some of the impulsiveness, that had charmed and frightened him in days gone by, reappeared suddenly in her manner and voice.

"Mr. Laborde," she said, "you have, with your well-known fondness for irrelevant remarks, hinted at some kind of connection between my married

state, now turned into widowhood, and your own too-long-protracted bachelorship. Did I understand you aright?"

He bowed, with a puzzled air. She went on, in the same brisk way:

"I have been doing a great deal of thinking in a few brief moments, and, possibly, there has been a misunderstanding somewhere, or, perhaps, a bungling of matters by outside interference. We are both of age now, not only physically, but mentally. Why should we be afraid of looking certain facts in the face, simply because they brought us some heart-burning once upon a time? Let us make up the account of the past. We may, after all, rescue a friendship out of the general wreck. And a friendship of twenty years' standing, you know, is a great and good thing in this ever-changing world."

Laborde was leaning against a column. His face, over which shade and sunshine passed in rapid alternation, was turned toward her. His right hand gripped the balustrade; the left hand, holding his Panama hat, hung by his side.

"Millie," he whispered, dreamily.

"Silly!" she rejoined, and laughed a little. "Now, first of all, let us put our present relations on a clear basis. A peace is always preceded by a truce, during which the combatants may exchange civilities of a formal character, but this does not cause them to embrace as friends. Remember, I am Mrs. Emily Kerrell Vanderplant, and you remain Mr. Laborde, until further notice. As yet, Millie is dead—and so is Francis."

The utterance of his name made her blush again, whereupon she pouted, in irritation at her lack of self-control. It made her look provokingly pretty. Their glances met, and both laughed. Her spirit had caught him.

"As you will!" he cried. "Let us resurrect the relics, and ascertain analytically and scientifically what the cause of death was—a bullet, dagger, poison, or, perchance, inborn lingering disease. Let us see—those chairs over in the corner there?"

"And, just behind the corner, there is a convenient window. We are unable to see anybody, but they will hear us. You men are always lacking in forethought."

"And you women are always thinking too far ahead, I sometimes fear."

They had been speaking in undertones. Now, she raised her voice a little above the pitch of ordinary conversation. "Yes, thank you, Mr. Laborde," she remarked, with an affable drawl, "I might walk along to the point. The breeze over there always gives me an appetite. Will you let me have your arm, please?"

As they moved down the stairs, her hand pressing his arm lightly, he whispered, under his breath, without turning his head:

"Millie."

The hand slipped from his arm.

"I'll be good," he muttered.

She opened her parasol, leisurely, and then took his arm again. Silently, but for a few words exchanged once or twice when other promenaders were passed or met, they walked along the macadamized path, that meandered across the lawn and cut through a clump of weather-worn firs, at the base of a rocky point which jutted far out into the sea, sloping gradually until it disappeared beneath the water. Half-way between the general shore line and the apex of that promontory, a pair of huge, divan-shaped boulders offered convenient seats. On these, they sat down a few feet apart, so that their eyes could meet when they turned their faces slightly toward each other. For a while, the two rested in meditative silence.

Before them lay the green sea, still growling angrily at the thought of the buffets it had received from the storm of the previous day. As it rolled itself up against them, in an endless series of white-lipped, hissing waves, it seemed to clutch at the two silent figures on the shore, without ever reaching them. No cloud spotted the shining blue of the sky.

Her eyes sought, at last, the face of the man by her side, and dwelt long on

his handsome, clear-cut profile. Gradually, a dimness crept into her eyes, obscuring her vision, and, when she spoke, her voice trembled.

"Why did you not come that day?"

"Why did I not come?" he repeated, blankly, as if still dwelling in some distant dreamland. Then, with a shrug of his shoulders, "What difference would it have made?"

"Not so—oh, I hate that state of mind!" Her face hardened, and her voice had a cold, metallic ring. "Everything we do, or fail to do, in this world makes a great difference; only, we find it more comfortable to pretend that such is not the case. Why did you not come?"

"How could I?"

"How!" She gasped for breath for a moment.

He wheeled around, so that he came to face her, put one leg across the other, and clasped his hands about the knee.

"Yes; how could I?"

"Oh, I am not in a mood to solve riddles now," she said, impatiently.

A peculiar look came into his eyes. She noticed it, and interrupted what he was about to say.

"Don't call me, 'Millie'! That will not help you at all now. You must answer my question."

The intensity with which she spoke made him smile. "Why, I have imagined all the time that it was I who——"

"You!" The word had the force of a blow, and the man winced under it.

Once more, both lapsed into silence. When she spoke, her voice sounded much deeper than before.

"Do you remember the dance at my father's Summer place, at the end of the season——?"

"I'll never forget it," he broke in. "It was the last glimmer of light—all darkness after that."

Her eyelids drooped. The point of her shoe, just visible beneath the hem of her skirt, moved restlessly among the pebbles on the ground.

"I fear we are getting a little too—too sentimental," she wavered.

"We'll never reach the main point in this way."

"That night, that night!" he persisted. "What a frail thing is human happiness!"

She sighed a little just then, but whether from sadness or impatience it would have been hard to tell.

"There was a girl that evening in her father's house——"

"Yes," he interjected, fervently; "a dark-eyed, smiling girl."

She nodded.

"Sylph-like."

She smiled a shadow of a smile.

"A bewitching girl."

"Perhaps."

"I see her still——"

"No, you don't. She is dead and gone, these twenty years. But she was in her bloom then, and was very happy for a little while. She had two admirers—no, she had many—but there were two of them she thought more of than all the others, or who thought more of her. One of those two——"

"A fool, a very fool!" he cried.

"Undoubtedly. That young man was nearest and dearest to her heart; so she thought, at least. He and she danced together many times that night. They talked between the dances, and, sometimes, looked so deep into each other's eyes that they forgot to speak."

The man bent his head, and groaned. She did not seem to take notice of it.

"The girl felt that the young man's mind was full of something that burned for utterance, and yet could not shape itself into words. Her heart beat faster and faster, as she watched his struggles, half in fear and half in joy. At last, his emotions mastered his reserve and took expression in hurried, passionate speech. Just then, when the deciding word was on the tip of his tongue, the appearance of his only rival, if rival he had, interrupted him."

The man said something between his teeth. Still she went on.

"They—he and she—had to part, and were kept away from each other, until the guests began to leave, when the young man found a chance to whis-

per into the girl's ear, 'Till to-morrow—you will let me tell the rest to-morrow?' And she, silly, inexperienced little thing, felt as happy as a goddess, and smiled, and pressed the hand that held hers."

"And the next day——?" He spoke hoarsely.

"The next day came," she resumed, "but not the young man. She waited all day for him and all night, first in joyful anticipation, then in breathless impatience, and, finally, in choking, heart-racking fear; but in vain. The rival came instead, and he had also something to tell the young girl. She cared little what it was, but she was proud and listened to him, and, when he left her, she had engaged herself to become his wife. The other young man never explained. The girl never heard a word from him. She did not see him again, until—until—to-day."

Her head drooped for a moment, but only for a moment. Then she raised it again, as if in defiance of her own weakness. Looking steadily at the man opposite her, she demanded once again:

"Why did you not come?"

He was pouring pebbles from one hand to the other, while his eyes stared blindly out over the surging, white-streaked sea.

"It all seemed so clear then." His voice was toneless as the beat of a muffled drum. "But now, I don't know——"

"You don't know?"

"I don't, and yet I do. I shall try to explain, as you insist on it, although— Listen! The young man went home that evening the happiest being who ever lived. During the night he could hardly sleep for joy and impatience. He rose the next morning with a song on his lips. Doubt and fear had no place in his heart. He walked about as in a trance, hearing but vaguely what was said to him, and answering with meaningless words. A close friend, who noticed his preoccupation and guessed the cause of it, told him, laughingly, to make sure of

his happiness with all haste. When he laughed at the warning——”

“When the young man laughed?”

“Of course; then his friend told him that he had a dangerous rival. I still remember his words: ‘Harry Vanderplant is after your girl in the hottest kind of way, and he is going to pop the question to her this very evening. I know it, because Harry always leaks. Take my advice, and get there in time.’ It only made me laugh still more——”

“It made the young man laugh,” she insisted.

“What’s the use? It was I. I ridiculed my friend’s fears, and asked him, mockingly, if he thought Harry was better liked than I. No, my friend admitted, Harry was behind; but the race was closer than I thought, and no one knew what might happen, if Harry got a first chance. His assurance began to annoy me.

“‘Do you mean to say,’ I asked him, ‘that my girl, that any girl, might choose a man that was not loved by her, simply because he happened to propose ahead of the man she really loved?’

“‘Women are queer,’ he replied. ‘They may be wildly in love with a man, and yet be capable of loving, or of making themselves think they love, another man at the same time. Though you are her first choice now, a trifle may change the whole situation.’”

“The—idiot!” Mrs. Vanderplant remarked, with scornful emphasis.

“Well, I don’t know,” he remarked, gloomily.

“But I do!” she retorted.

Her outbreak surprised him and threw him out of the line of thought he had been pursuing. A new idea took hold of his mind, and made him gaze at her with knitted brows, as one trying to solve a difficult riddle. Soon, however, a toss of his head indicated that he had disposed summarily of what appeared to be only a foolish notion. He took up the broken thread of his story.

“I parted from my friend, unconvinced, but with a strange disquiet in my heart. His words kept ringing in my ears, and my mind wrestled with

the novel idea that some other man might be preferred by the girl, of whose love I had felt sure till then. The mere possibility of a choice between me and somebody else revolted me. One moment I scorned the thought of it, and longed for vengeance on the man who had dared to offer such an insult to my heart’s love. And then, again, I quailed in abject fear, as a voice within me seemed to cry, ‘But if, if——’

“And it was as if the girl herself had told me she was not certain of her own heart. Then unreasonable anger boiled within me, and I muttered, ‘No, no; it is for me to find out.’

“‘Choice?’ I asked myself; ‘does any choice exist for me? Do I carry more than one image in my heart, ready to contemplate now this, now that one, and to compare each flaw and merit of both? Could that be called love at all, which was not so sure of itself that there could be no choice?’

“To many I must have seemed like a madman while I tramped up and down the streets, for I know that I often spoke aloud. My friend’s words continued to ring in my ears all the time, until their truth began to appear unquestionable. ‘What a farce!’ I cried, at last—if aloud or merely in my thought I do not know. Could it be that my life’s happiness, all that made life valuable to me at that moment, depended not on the love that filled her heart as it did mine, but on some chance happening that would give either to me or to some one else the advantage of precedence—on the breaking down of a cab or the treachery of a dropped banana-peel? Such thoughts as those soon dislodged all my former happy confidence, and left nothing but doubt in its place. And from this doubt came torture that was not to be endured.”

She had grown pale, while listening to him. Her breath came and went quickly. Now she almost hissed:

“And all that for the sake of a meddler’s loose tongue!”

He was sitting up very straight, with his hands resting on his knees. As he spoke, his words stumbled and tram-

pled on one another, as if precipitated by a fear that he might be interrupted, before he had had time to give utterance to all that had weighed and preyed on his mind for nearly half a lifetime.

"And yet," he resumed, without even noticing her words, "when the first tumult had subsided, the doubt that disturbed me concerned less the final outcome than the immediate action to be decided on. My reason convinced me that I had no right or cause to question the good faith of the girl; but it could not dispose of a feeling, which had rooted itself in my heart, that, if I carried out my intention of proposing this day and was accepted, I should ever afterward be haunted, in weak moments, by the thought that maybe, after all, I had not been the first and only choice, but simply the first comer.

"The end of it was that I made up my mind not to call that night, as I had promised to do. It seemed so clear to me that, if her love were worthy of mine and worth having, it could not be imperiled by a single day's delay, or by the intervention of any other man. I felt more and more strongly that, as I had been willing to eliminate every possibility but one, and to concentrate my whole energy on the realization of that one, so should there, to her, exist only one man. If there were others—well, then she was not for me. Hard as it might be to give up my cherished dream of happiness, it would be harder still to wake up later and find myself tied for life to a person who did not love me, and who, therefore, might easily come to hate me."

Her foot beat a succession of light taps on the ground. Her mouth curved downward scornfully.

"Oh, you wise men!" she said; "you are wonderful!"

He was lost in his own thoughts, and did not seem to listen.

"Tell me now," she began again, a moment later, "on your word of honor, were you from the very beginning so sure of your own feelings as you wished that poor girl to be of hers?"

"I—I don't know," he stammered.

"Yes, I think—no, perhaps not. There was a time, of course, when——"

"Indeed, there was a time! Did it then never occur to you that the young girl's mind might not have passed that period of initial uncertainty?—that, while it was already strongly inclined to one side, new events and new influences might still tip it over to the other side?"

"No," he replied, with conviction, "because she would not have behaved then as she did to me the night before. And, besides, what happened later proved me right."

"Oh, much-bepraised man's logic!" she cried.

"Why, that is logical enough," he pleaded.

She turned her eyes to the sky, without answering. Then she asked:

"Did you finish your story?"

"Yes—no; I walked the streets till long after midnight, and finally returned home, after having decided that my failure to keep the appointment should serve as a test of her love. The test—the next day I heard the news. Well, you know——"

"Which proves what a stupid, blundering—pardon me, but I must apply the word once more—idiot you were."

"Which, on the contrary, proves that I was right," he rejoined, rather stiffly.

"No, you were not," she contradicted him, passionately. "And I shall tell you why. First of all, young girls are so different from young men—their position in the struggle we call love-making is so different. They are ignorant of so many things—not only of facts, but of emotions and sensations. They do not possess the knowledge of life, which should enable them to look through the motives and characters of the men who flutter about them. Their very innocence breeds within them a timidity, that prevents them from becoming sufficiently intimate with a man to judge him. What they call judgment is guesswork only. Their sympathies are unreflected. Their love—why, I believe it does not happen in one case out of a hundred

that a young woman's love—that is, a feeling strong enough to be worthy of that name—is bestowed until after the marriage. Till then, she thinks that she is in love, while, in reality, she is only drifting along, moved by anything and everything but that which should be her single guide—a clear understanding of her own heart.”

“But I was right,” he reiterated, although with less assurance than before; “else, why were you in such a hurry to accept the other man?”

She folded together the parasol, which, till then, had formed a background to her face. The substitution of the rich blue of the sky made her look still paler.

“If you could only comprehend what I went through that evening!” she said, dragging the words a little, while she poked in the sand with her parasol. “I also was happy up to a certain time, as I have already told you. I had no doubts, either. If you had said nothing at all, when you left the night before, everything would have gone on as formerly. But you had aroused expectations in me, the disappointment of which seemed doubly bitter because it hurt my vanity also. I am not merely defending myself—I am trying to explain. Young girls, you know, are not perfect beings; they have vanity—a great deal of vanity.

“As the hours passed by, and you did not come, I found myself on glowing coals. The other man was there, all the time. I had thought of him—perhaps—but never as of you—until then. My humiliation, my impatience and my anger, grew apace. What was, at first, a vague suspicion became a conviction, and took hold of me ever more firmly. It was, that you had just been having fun with me, using me as a pretty plaything, and throwing me away when the play threatened to take a serious turn. It was then that the new thought, the thought of the other man, first assumed definite shape and began to tempt me. That would be to show you how much you really mattered to me. Little fool that I was, I did not

understand that by punishing another one may punish one's self ten times worse.

“But I did not take the fatal step until you had had your full chance. I went so far as to send a message to your sister, asking for you—under some excuse or another, which I do not recall now. The answer was that you had gone out early with friends, and no one knew where you were. I, too, formed a decision. I said that the midnight hour, if you had not appeared by then, should conclude all relations between you and me, and also settle my fate, once for all. It seems such an easy and proper thing, when one's blood is heated, to play one's own providence, with the help of a dice-box or a clock-hand.

“The other man, he who had come, was most eager to bring his errand to a conclusion, but I held him back cruelly, mercilessly, until the appointed moment should have arrived. I plagued him almost beyond his endurance. Each time he tried to corner me, I wriggled out into some new topic, until he looked as black as a storm-cloud. And yet, I think if it had not been for his extraordinary perseverance——”

He, between his teeth: “Curse it!”

“Beg pardon? Oh, I thought you said something. Well, in that manner I kept him and his question suspended in mid-air till the last echo of the stroke of twelve had died out, hoping and waiting all the time——”

“For what?” He reached out a hand, as if expecting that one of hers would be placed in it.

“Don't mind what,” she said, motioning the suppliant hand away. “Then I let him speak. When it was all over, he remarked, with just a touch of temper, that it was already long after midnight. At the same time, he expressed a mild desire to know why I had tormented him so long. There was another chance for—somebody. Had he gone a fraction of a step farther, had his tone been one shade more irritated, nobody knows what might have happened. But he

managed to remain within the danger limit. All I said to him was: 'Yes, it is after midnight, at last, and I do not wish you to propose to me on a Friday, darling.'

"Darling!" He blew out the word, as one blows away a feather.

"Yes, that was what I called him then, and what I called him for many years after that. I was a pretty good wife to him."

"I dare say."

"Don't sneer. It is the least a woman can do to a man on whom she has practised a great deceit."

He sprang to his feet, with his face flushed, his eyes shining and his lips moving, as if in too great eagerness for ordered speech.

"Yes, there are quite a number of people on the veranda and the lawns now." She turned in that direction. "Some have marine-glasses. It is a fine view from the hotel."

The man resumed his seat, and began to use his hat as a fan.

"Would you like my parasol?" she suggested. "I am not very warm."

"Deceit!" he repeated, in a more quiet tone.

"Deceit, indeed." Her voice was perfectly calm. Her features were serene, her bearing grave. "Perhaps, you have a certain right to know it. I respected and admired and liked that man, but in my heart I never—Sit still, Francis!"

"Millie!" was all he could utter.

"Shall I go for a glass of water?"

He stooped over, with his head buried in his hands. A few times, he rocked back and forth as if in pain. Finally, he muttered, under his breath:

"And all these long years——"

"Wasted!" she said, quietly;

"wasted because a slip of a girl was too proud, and a young man tried to go by principles where his feelings ought to have been uppermost; wasted because I did not know what marriage implied, nor you what love was; wasted because you played so cruelly with your own happiness——" very softly—"and with mine, Francis."

He had gathered himself together. Only his eyes showed signs of the fire that was burning within him.

"It is 'Francis' now?" he asked, leaning over toward her, but not coming too close.

"Yes, and 'Millie.' Why should it not be so between old, old enemies who have made their peace?"

"And more?"

"What more?"

"The future!"

He arose, and she followed his example, more slowly. Giving her hand to him, which he took between both of his, she said:

"Who knows, Francis? Sufficient unto the day be the story thereof. We have told and heard long and interesting tales to-day. Don't let us crowd too much within the narrow confines of a single day; let us not repeat the mistake of making a single day the arbiter of all the years that are to follow. The future—we'll leave it to some other morning—not very distant; not to-morrow, exactly. You are going to stay here, are you not? And now—I am hungry."

He stood still, looking at her hand, as he had done when they first met.

"I know now," he exclaimed, suddenly. "White hyacinth."

Then he bent down over the little hand, that lay so quietly in his own, and kissed it softly, reverently. And she let him do it.



"IS her social position an assured one?"

"I should say so! Why, it's bounded on the north by two generations of scandals, on the east by Newport, on the south by ten millions, and on the west by South Dakota."

“ ’TIS FOLLY TO BE WISE ”

By Robert Bloom

“ **B**UT think what a shock it would be to your friends!”

“I am sorry for the friends,” Wilkins answered, indifferently, “but this thing must be settled. I am in love with both of them, and how am I to know which to choose? To die is my only way out of it.”

“That sounds very tragic.” Ford crossed the room leisurely, and stirred the fire. Then his face suddenly grew serious. He stepped quickly back to where his friend lay stretched on the divan, lazily looking at death through rings of cigarette-smoke.

“Now, look here, Wilkins; you don’t really intend to do anything so silly. It is an absurd plan. Just let me state your imbecility to you plainly, and I believe you will give up making a fool of yourself.”

Wilkins laughed. “You’re rather harsh, but you, too, have already promised to be a fool; so be careful not to hurt your own feelings.”

“Well, here’s a statement of the matter; see how you like it. You say you are in love with Eleanor Stavor and Mollie Mullane, and you have rather a tender feeling for that nice little girl who lives in the big brown house. I’d like to ask what you know about love; but we’ll talk about that another time. You think you are getting tired of living peacefully up here in these quiet rooms, with no one to bother you but another fellow, who likes to be left alone as well as you do yourself. You think your happiness now depends upon getting a home, with either Mollie or Eleanor, or, perhaps, the little girl of the big brown house, to sit up nights and cry

her eyes out, because you don’t come home. It sounds jolly, doesn’t it? Your way of attaining this earthly paradise is equally pleasant and unselfish.”

“See here, Ford, that’s not fair,” pleaded Wilkins. He leaned over and picked up a photograph.

“She is a beauty. Look at her eyes, Ford; they’re so big and brown!”

“Yes; and the others are so big and blue,” answered his companion, sympathetically. “But let me go on with your scheme. Your difficulty is this: You are too affectionate; you love not only one girl, but two, with the possibility of a third. Unfortunately, you can marry but one. Which shall it be? You think you can get out of your trouble by announcing that you are dead, and then you will discover which girl really loves you. Think how we shall feel, when you have to come back to life! And no girl will marry you after such a trick.”

Wilkins made no immediate reply. He seemed stubbornly determined. “I can make that all right, afterward, if I find out that she really loves me. I can see that it won’t be so pleasant for you, Ford, but there’s no other way. I can’t regularly propose, for there are two of them; and, if the first one accepted, there would be the other, whom I’d be regretting all my life.”

“I promised to help you before I knew what tomfoolery you were planning, so I suppose I’ll have to go through it. I hate to wear a long face all that time, during your illness—which we’ll cut short—and the day of your death. Then, you will expect me to

make funeral arrangements, and send announcements to your friends, and receive their condolences. I'll be hanged if I cry for you! And then, after it is all over, you won't know any more than you did before. But go ahead, and hurry through it. I'll do my part."

"See here, Willie; the carrier just brought them. This one is pink, sweetly scented and carefully sealed. That doesn't look much like self-forgetful grief, does it? Let me read your friends' lamentations:

"MY DEAR MR. FORD:

"It shocked me greatly to hear of Mr. Wilkins's death. I feel the deepest sympathy for you; but it is only one like you, who knew his best qualities, who can fully appreciate the loss. Come to see me as soon as you are relieved of your painful duties.

"Sincerely yours,

"ELEANOR STAVOR."

Wilkins groaned, but Ford opened another note, and went on, relentlessly:

"MY DEAR MR. FORD:

"The carriage is waiting for me, and I am already due at Mrs. Harwood's reception; but I must write just a word to tell you how grieved I was to hear of Mr. Wilkins's death. Surely, you will not disappoint me next week? I have my heart set on seeing you at my fancy-dress ball. Poor Mr. Wilkins! He was to have led the cotillion with me. It is very sad. You must come.

"Very truly yours,

"MARGARET MULLANE."

The chilling silence that followed the reading of the letters was broken by a knock at the door. Ford opened it, and received into his arms an enormous bouquet of white roses, without a card. Hurrying to the window, he saw a carriage driving down the avenue, toward the big brown house.



IF LOVE HAD WEARIED

IF Love had wearied of my house and me,
And on a day had kissed me carelessly,
And crossed my threshold like a homing guest,
Why, I had laughed, and given jest for jest,
And bade him speed where other pleasures be.

But I—I wrenched my hands from his hands free
And mocked his prayers and eyes of misery;
Yea, sent him from me whom I loved the best—
If Love had wearied.

No other way there was; yet, oh, that he
Had less reproachful eyes to turn and see,
And hands less clinging and a mouth less sweet!
O heart of mine, that follows his slow feet,
Parting, perchance, had held less cruelty—
If Love had wearied.

JOHN WINWOOD.



CLARA—I am afraid I shall never learn to swim.

MAUD—Why not?

"He won't let go of me long enough."

THE INTRUDER

By Ethel Watts Mumford

THE dowager duchess sat, stiff and grim, amid the dimmed splendors of the great hall of the château. She was small, slender, aristocratic to the tips of her lean fingers. The poise of her head was haughty, the glance of her eye, save to her few equals, a scornful rebuff. The dowager duchess not only represented the ancient house of Vantôme, but came herself of a line that traced itself back to dim days of heroic legends—the Gleöcs-Keral of Brittany. Now she awaited the coming of her only son, Germain Marie Claude Raoul, Duke of Villiers-Vantôme, and his parvenu bride.

Mellow chimes from the clock-tower of the Henry IV. wing rang out the hour—eleven. The sonorous music, beating softly through the wide halls, gathered mystery and depth as it reverberated from the Gothic arches of the chapel to drift in roaring cadence down the echoing corridors. The dowager duchess shuddered. Only half an hour more, and the stately palace must acknowledge an upstart American as its mistress. As she gazed on the painted ornaments of the huge, hooded fireplace—the rampant stags of Vantôme—tears rose to her eyes, tears of humiliation and disappointment. Was it for this she had servilely labored since the death of her husband? She had administered the estate with a hand of iron, that its dwindling revenues might provide the hereditary luxury, that Raoul might appear in Paris in the state befitting his rank, might live as the Duke de Vantôme should live, and marry a woman whose quarterings should do

honor to the princely parchments of his father's pedigree. She had cloistered herself to live to this end, and to command the loyalty of peasants, the grudging homage of neighboring chatelaines. She had lived rigidly by the old régime; but her son had succumbed to the new.

She had refused to attend his wedding, giving ill health as her excuse; had been represented by her gift alone, the famous Valois necklace—*noblesse oblige*; the gifts of the dowager duchess must be princely.

Slow color mounted to her ashen cheeks, at the recollection of the Marquise de Vaux's scornful congratulations.

"Ah, *ma chère*, I hear from Paris, Raoul is to make a great marriage, a *dot* of millions, they say—oh, but millions and millions and millions—made in pork!"

"Raoul does not need to consider money," the dowager duchess had answered, superbly mendacious; "the lands are intact." The marquise had winced, visibly. The estates of Vaux were mortgaged, neglected.

"Nor family, either, it would seem," the viper tongue had retorted.

"Yes, he has sufficient of that, also." The dowager duchess had the better of the encounter, yet the stab went deep.

The flighty, beruffled occupants of Arques Forret had dared to call upon her, excusing the intrusion by their intimacy with the foreign fiancée. Fortunately, she had been able to crush them with the accumulated magnificence of the château and her own queenly demeanor.

The sound of wheels aroused her from painful reverie.

Subdued whisperings in the corridor warned her that the servants were collected to welcome the new châteline. The ponderous, bronze-studded doors swung wide. The soft-toned tapestries undulated along the walls. A breath of Autumn air, sad with the memories of fallen leaves, swept into the room.

She remained seated in her ancient, throne-like chair, before the fire, only turning her head slightly as her tall son hurried to her side. Silently, she extended the thin fingers heavy with rings.

"Be welcome, my son," she said, at length.

He kissed the proffered hand.

"Madame, my mother—I present to you my wife, Claire."

With stately grace she turned to the intruder. "My son's wife should be welcome to Vantôme."

The girl bowed gracefully, but the flush that mantled her cheeks revealed her sense of the grudging reception accorded her.

The dowager duchess regarded her daughter-in-law fixedly, noting every line of the frail, fashionably gowned figure, every detail of the small, oval face, with its wide-set, blue eyes, and crown of iridescent black hair. The girl shivered slightly.

"You are cold," the dowager duchess suggested. "Raoul, there is wine and cake upon the table. The Autumn winds are chill."

"Thank you," said the bride, simply. "I am cold. I have only just recovered from a long illness, as perhaps you know."

"My son has told me. You must be weary. Amélie will conduct you to your apartments."

A gaunt woman, wearing the characteristic garb of Arles, appeared at the door as her name was spoken. With a sigh, half of weariness, half of relief, the Duchess Claire rose.

"Pardon my not accompanying you," the unforgiving voice went on; "I do not walk with ease." As the

dowager spoke, she slightly lifted an ebony cane.

"An accident in the hunting field," her son hastened to explain, with a slight laugh. "You would never imagine that my mother was once a most enthusiastic sportswoman, first in every boar hunt in the arrondissement, would you?"

The girl looked up with a quick wonder in her blue eyes. She knew little or nothing of the *ancien régime*.

"Go and rest, Claire," her husband persisted, gently. "Remember, you are an invalid still. Amélie, see that she is well cared for."

The woman nodded, as her young mistress, with an inclination to the others, passed before her.

"Pretty and presentable, is she not, madame, *ma mère*?" said the duke, playfully, anxiety piercing the lightness of his tone.

His mother's eyes froze, her mouth set tight. "Pretty she is—presentable, never! The daughter of a parvenu, without race, without pride—presentable? Not among your father's people nor mine!"

"She's a sweet little girl," her son insisted, his brow darkening. "Her *dot* will place us once more among the first houses of France." That he loved his wife sincerely, was the last reason he would have dreamed of putting forward. He dreaded his mother's ridicule.

"Better poverty! And this"—with a sweeping gesture to the faded glories of the hall—"is *not* poverty; yet better the poverty of Gilles of the cross-roads, than a stain upon that!" She pointed bitterly to the shield and rampant stags of the carved mantel.

Raoul winced. "Do you love me, mother?" he asked, abruptly.

She turned to him. Her hard eyes softened, her mouth relaxed. "You are my only son," she answered.

He leaned over her, solicitous, tender. "Then be kind to her—for my sake. Remember, she is young, very young. She has been ill, is only half recovered. If her father had not

been called back to America, we should have postponed the wedding till the new year. Don't make it hard for her!"

"It is not as your mother that I object to this marriage," she said, slowly, avoiding a direct answer to his request. "It is the widow of Duke Henri of Villiers-Vantôme who rebels, the last descendant of du Guesclin, of the Gleöcs-Kerals, who weeps over this dishonor. I know it is useless, I know that in this age all that is thought of is money, all that gives position is extravagance. I belong to the relegated generation, with which honor and breeding is the only seal of superiority. I cannot accept this mésalliance as you would have me."

"She is a sick child, mother."

"She is an intruder in the house of your forefathers." The dowager duchess rose, leaning heavily upon her ebony cane. "Your hand, Raoul." He hastened to her assistance. "The gallery," she said, quietly.

They crossed the huge room slowly, her quick eyes flashing with pride unutterable upon the tattered banners, the shining trophies, the stands of armor; resting with loving recollection upon the vast Breton chests of carved wood, black with age, ponderous with Gothic locks, that had contained her marriage linens, heir-looms of the vast, rugged castle in which her early years had bloomed and waned.

Her son swung back the door to the passage, held the tapestry aside as she entered, and rejoined her, offering his arm.

The gallery was vast, long and narrow, one side a series of deep-set Gothic windows looking out upon terraces, where a sun-dial stared blankly at gray, Autumnal heavens, and mossy, marble rims confined dark spaces of water that reflected the deep green of huge hedges of trimmed box and cedar.

On the wall, facing the somber outlook, the portraits of the dead lords

of Vantôme, with their ladies, hung, row on row—belaced seigneurs and mincing dames, by Mesnard; stalwart, beruffled gentlemen, by Vandyke; a subtle, smiling Italian countess, pictured by da Vinci; a black-browed, Spanish infanta, by Murillo; a laughing demoiselle de Bourgogne, by Rubens, and many more. Not one of all that pictured gathering but bore, either upon the masterly canvas, or its convoluted frame, the arms and tokens of heraldic fame—not one.

The dowager duchess made no comment. The duke understood; yet he persisted in his attempt to break down the barriers of caste. As they reëntered the great hall, he turned to her once more.

"Madame, *ma mère*, you will go to her soon; will you not? Make some excuse—anything. Be gentle with her, make her feel at home. You were once a bride. You know what it must be to come among strange faces and surroundings. Besides, she is not even of our country—think how alone she is! Mother, forget you are a Vantôme—remember you are a woman!"

They paused a moment by the huge centre-table with its weight of treasures—massive silver candlesticks, enamel boxes, the great horn of carved ivory, gift of Mazarin to Duke Jean IV., the bowl of priceless d'Oiron faïence, the work of the Countess Hélène herself. The eyes of the dowager duchess rested upon a casket of wrought steel. A strange look flitted across her pale, set face, a look at once of horror and fanaticism.

"Is this woman a heretic?" she asked, turning suddenly.

"She is a Protestant, madame, *ma mère*. We were married by special dispensation. I have no doubt," he added, grasping at this straw of hope, "that, if you will gain her confidence, you can win her to the Church."

She shook her head. "If she has not recanted for your sake, she will not for mine," she answered, coldly.

The strange look deepened in her

old eyes, her thin, claw-like fingers played nervously with the hasps of steel. There was a moment's silence.

"Leave me now, Raoul," she said, slowly; "I wish to be alone. Later, I shall go to see your wife. She seems not well—I shall do for her what seems necessary."

The duke's face lighted up, joyously. "You are good, madame, *ma mère*. I knew, in the end, you would accept her for my sake."

"For your sake I shall do much. May God forgive me!"

He raised her unresisting hand to his lips. She seemed not to notice it, her head was sunk upon her breast, her eyes fixed upon the foliated lock.

"I leave you, then, madame, *ma mère*."

She nodded, absently.

Once alone, she glanced up, quickly, casting a look almost furtive about the silent room. Helmets gleamed in the subdued light. Omphale and Hercules stared out unseeing from the tapestry, the gargoyles of the carved beams grimaced, unobservant.

"None can ever guess," said the dowager duchess, slowly. She sought at her side the silver chatelaine with its trousseau of keys, which had been worn for generations by the ladies of Vantôme. She fitted and turned the key in the ancient box, threw back the lid, and looked within. There lay various packets wrapped in soft silk; one, larger and flatter than the others, she withdrew daintily. A yellowed slip of paper bore characters in old French: "The gloves of Catharine de' Medici, Queen of France, wife of Charles IX., given by her to Jeanne de Gae, second wife of Michael de Vantôme. These gloves were poisoned by Conotelli, the celebrated alchemist, who accompanied Catharine when, as Princess of Florence, she was married to the son of Francis I. To put one on is said to be certain and painless death, leaving no trace whatsoever. The secret, which belonged originally to the Borgias, died with the physician of the great Catharine."

She folded the slip, concealing it in her bosom.

A few moments later, the dowager duchess requested admittance to the presence of the new mistress of the manor.

Claire shivered slightly, as she lay on the great carved bed with its hangings of embroidered Genoese velvet, and, drawing her lacy *négligée* about her, struggled to a sitting position. "If she will pardon—will pardon—!" she stammered. The slow tap of the ebony cane and the heavy step outside her door made her tremble anew. In her weakness, she feared this haughty woman of ice and iron, as she had feared no one else in her life. She longed for the comforting presence of her husband, but it would be best to receive his mother at once.

Amélie flew to the door. The dowager duchess dropped the arm of the man-servant who escorted her, and leaned her weight upon the faithful *Arlésienne*.

"Pierre, bring the steel casket from the table in the tapestry hall—now, at once." The cane tapped impatiently. Turning, the dowager advanced slowly toward the bed.

Claire gazed, fascinated; she strove to rise, but sank back as, with a wave of her hand, her stately visitor directed. Amélie placed a chair for her mistress, taking up her position behind it.

"The casket for which I have sent contains some heirlooms. They should have formed a part of my wedding gift, but I preferred to wait till you came to place them in your keeping. In your country, perhaps, they do not value such things."

"Oh, yes, indeed we do," cried the girl. "You don't know how I love this wonderful place and all the beautiful things. Please don't think we Americans have so little appreciation——"

She broke off, tremulous, uncertain. Something in the inflexibility of the stern mouth before her, in the concentrated fire of the dark eyes that burned into hers, made her feel

strangely apprehensive. To her overwrought nerves, the woman before her seemed a terrible incarnation of some bird of prey, with curving beak and lean, unmerciful talons, herself its weak and fluttering quarry.

"Many of these things—trifles, some of them—were gifts or souvenirs of the great men and women who have honored Vantôme with their presence," the duchess went on. "Raoul never has taken the interest in these matters that he should. Half of these trophies he has never seen, nor has he ever cared to inquire into their history when he has been shown them. Yet, as *chatelaine*, you must guard and care for them."

"You honor me, madame," said the Duchess Claire.

A knock at the door interrupted them. The gaunt servant received the casket, and, placing it on the bed, was dismissed.

The older woman opened the box painfully; the lock was stiff and complicated; her jeweled fingers trembled.

"This," she said, reverently, opening a tattered velvet case of almost unrecognizable blue, "is the marshal's baton of Angoulême, and this, the ring of Cardinal Richelieu."

Claire sat up, her eyes wide, her breath coming quick. "How wonderful!" she murmured. The ring of Richelieu!—a huge, engraved amethyst, set in heavy gold. She slipped the band upon her finger, turning it over and over with awe.

"This is the tambour and part of the embroidery, just as she left it, made by Anne of Brittany during her brief stay in Normandy. She occupied the turret apartments in the old wing."

"Here?" asked Claire, under her breath.

"Here," said the dowager duchess. "This pin belonged to Mary Stuart, the Scottish princess, when she was the wife of the dauphin of France. These were her rooms—this is the bed she slept in."

Claire's eyes traveled in bewilderment over the huge, dark pillars, the

red and tarnished gold of the hangings. "Mary Queen of Scots!" she murmured. "This—this is all like a dream, a sort of fairy story. I—I can't realize——"

The older woman smiled, contemptuously. "Here is the snuff-box my lord of Buckingham presented, when he was envoy from England at the court of Louis XV. The fan was the Montespan's; this star, the gift of Louis XIV. to Duke John—the royal party occupied Vantôme during the Autumn hunts; that dagger Diane de Poitiers wore to the chase—see the entwined crescents on the guard and the leaping stag upon the hilt. But, perhaps, I weary you."

"No, no!" cried the Duchess Claire. "This is all fairyland, too good to be true. I shall wake up—I know I shall!"

"Here is a diamond shoe-buckle of La Pompadour's. The *reliquaire* was made by Benvenuto Cellini to the order of Cardinal Vantôme." The claw fingers touched the last packet, fearfully. There was a pause, the bright eyes clouded. A spasm contracted the grim mouth, leaving it livid and determined.

The Duchess Claire gave no heed. With reverent fingers, she turned and re-turned the golden reliquary, with its garlands and sculptured saints, wondering, dreaming. All these treasures, hers! treasures heavy with the weight of centuries—actual, tangible links in the great human chain of history, bringing the past here to her hands—hands born and grown in that far, new world, where the wheel of Fortune whirled a hundred years of concentrated living into as many days. Something of the awe of mighty heights and depths grew in her soul, leaving her shrinking upon the brink of eternities of time and life. She raised her eyes to the face of the woman beside her. It was white as death itself, and as cold.

"These," said the dowager duchess, bending low over the packet in her lap, "are the gloves of Queen Catharine de' Medici. They were embroi-

dered for the wife of Duke Michael. They have never been worn—look, how soft and flexible they are after all these years.”

The Duchess Claire took the gloves, silently.

“How sweet they smell,” she said, softly, raising them to her face, breathing the strange, dim fragrance they exhaled. “What is it? It’s like nothing that I know—it seems hardly of earth.”

“Put one on your hand for a few moments.” The dowager duchess looked away, her eyes fixed on the ivory-and-silver crucifix upon the wall. “Your hand will retain the perfume, so they say, for a long, long time. It was a secret, the property of Catharine’s court physician, and it died with him.”

The girl obeyed, gently pulling on the embroidered gauntlet, preserved almost miraculously, its texture still flexible and fine, its golden flowers still whole, though brown with age.

“See how it fits!” she exclaimed. “It might have been made for me instead of for the wife of Duke Michael.”

“Jean wishes to know at what hour you wish the *déjeuner*.” The Arlésienne stood at the door.

“When the duke is ready,” said the dowager duchess. Then, turning to her daughter-in-law: “Don’t try to come down. Stay and take your rest. Amélie will serve you here, and Raoul shall come to you afterward. Let us put back your treasures now.”

One by one, the storied relics were returned to their places, folded, unwrapped, encased many times, the girl stripping the gauntlet from her hand, reluctantly, and the gloves of

the Florentine disappeared from the light of day to their steel prison.

With a sigh, the bride leaned back among her pillows. “I am so sleepy!” she murmured.

The dowager duchess rose with the help of her ebony cane, standing above the girl, a dark, brooding shadow.

“My daughter,” she said—there was something tense and terrible in her tone—“my daughter, you will forgive me, if I have dealt hardly with you. Remember, I have but one son, and for him I have wished only the greatest and best the world had to give. I am the descendant of the kings of Brittany; my husband came from the lords of the Norman conqueror. When the hour comes that I must be judged, remember this. Forgive what seemed cruel.”

The Duchess Claire sought to open her eyes, sought to make reply. Her lips repeated, mechanically, “What seemed cruel—forgive—” and, with a little sigh, like a tired child, she turned on her pillows, and fell asleep. Her face grew yellow-white as wax, her breathing difficult. How black seemed her hair on the white pillow!

Slowly, the dowager duchess crossed the room; slowly, the sound of her ebony cane and dragging footfall sounded down the echoing corridor. She found her way, unaided, to the wide hall, where the banners hung in tattered glory, where the shining arms of forgotten heroes gleamed in martial array.

There, in her great throne-chair, she sat down, her heart dead within her shrunken breast.

“No one will ever know,” murmured the dowager duchess. “My son’s sons have been spared a low-born mother—God rest her soul!”



QUITE DIFFERENT

FLORA—Is it true that Mr. Lyttlebragne is worth a lot of money?
DORA—Er—well—he *has* a lot of money.

A COLLEGE SANTA CLAUS

By Ralph Henry Barbour

SATHERWAITE, '02, threw his overcoat across the broad mahogany table, regardless of the silver and cutglass furnishings, shook the melting snowflakes from his cap and tossed it atop the coat, half kicked, half shoved a big leathern arm-chair up to the wide fireplace, dropped himself into it, and stared moodily at the flames.

Satherwaite was troubled. In fact, he assured himself, drawing his handsome features into a generous scowl, that he was, on this Christmas eve, the most depressed and bored person in the length and breadth of New England. Satherwaite was not used to being depressed, and boredom was a state usually far remote from his experience; consequently, he took it worse. With something between a groan and a growl, he drew a crumpled telegram from his pocket. The telegram was at the bottom of it all. He read it again:

R. SATHERWAITE,
Randolph Hall, Cambridge.

Advise your not coming. Aunt Louise very ill. Merry Christmas.

PHIL.

"‘Merry Christmas!’" growled Satherwaite, throwing the offending sheet of buff paper into the flames. "Looks like it, doesn't it? Confound Phil's Aunt Louise, anyway! What business has she getting sick at Christmas time? Not, of course, that I wish the old lady any harm, but it—it—well, it's wretched luck."

When at college, Phil was the occupant of the bedroom that lay in darkness beyond the half-opened door to the right. He lived, when at home,

in a big, rambling house in the Berkshires, a house from the windows of which one could see into three states and overlook a wonderful expanse of wooded hill and sloping meadow; a house which held, beside Phil, and Phil's father and mother and Aunt Louise and a younger brother, Phil's sister. Satherwaite growled again, more savagely, at the thought of Phil's sister; not, be it understood, at that extremely attractive young lady, but at the fate which was keeping her from his sight.

Satherwaite had promised his roommate to spend Christmas with him, thereby bringing upon himself pained remonstrances from his own family, remonstrances which, Satherwaite acknowledged, were quite justifiable. His bags stood beside the door. He had spent the early afternoon very pleasurably in packing them, carefully weighing the respective merits of a primrose waistcoat and a blue flannel one, as weapons wherewith to impress the heart of Phil's sister. And now——!

He kicked forth his feet, and brought brass tongs and shovel clattering on the hearth. It relieved his exasperation.

The fatal telegram had reached him at five o'clock, as he was on the point of donning his coat. From five to six, he had remained in a torpor of disappointment, smoking pipe after pipe, and continually wondering whether Phil's sister would care. At six, his own boarding-house being closed for the recess, he had trudged through the snow to a restaurant in the square, and had dined miserably

on lukewarm turkey and lumpy mashed potatoes. And now it was nearly eight, and he did not even care to smoke. His one chance of reaching his own home that night had passed, and there was nothing for it but to get through the interminable evening somehow, and catch an early train in the morning. The theatres in town offered no attraction. As for his club, he had stopped in on his way from dinner, and had fussed with an evening paper, until the untenanted expanse of darkly-furnished apartments and the unaccustomed stillness had driven him forth again.

He drew his long legs under him, and arose, crossing the room and drawing aside the deep-toned hangings before the window. It was still snowing. Across the avenue, a flood of mellow light from a butcher's shop was thrown out over the snowy sidewalk. Its windows were garlanded with Christmas greens and hung with pathetic-looking turkeys and geese. Belated shoppers passed out, their arms piled high with bundles. A car swept by, its drone muffled by the snow. The spirit of Christmas was in the very air. Satherwaite's depression increased and, of a sudden, inaction became intolerable. He would go and see somebody, anybody, and make them talk to him; but, when he had his coat in his hands, he realized that even this comfort was denied him. He had friends in town, nice folk who would be glad to see him any other time, but into whose family gatherings he could no more force himself to-night than he could steal. As for the men he knew in college, they had all gone to their homes or to those of somebody else.

Staring disconsolately about the study, it suddenly struck him that the room looked disgustingly slovenly and unkempt. Phil was such an untidy beggar! He would fix things up a bit. If he did it carefully and methodically, no doubt he could consume a good hour and a half that way. It would then be half-past nine. Possibly, if he tried hard, he could use up

another hour bathing and getting ready for bed. And at half-past ten lots of fellows went to sleep. He could not remember having done so himself of late years, but he could try it; and, if he succeeded, it would be a good joke to tell Phil—confound him!

As a first step, he removed his coat from the table, and laid it carefully across the foot of the leather couch. Then he placed his damp cap on one end of the mantel. The next object to meet his gaze was a well-worn notebook. It was not his own, and it did not look like Phil's. The mystery was solved when he opened it and read, "H. G. Doyle—College House," on the fly-leaf. He remembered then. He had borrowed it from Doyle almost a week before, at a lecture. He had copied some of the notes, and had forgotten to return the book. It was very careless of him; he would return it as soon as— Then he recollected having seen Doyle at noon that day, coming from one of the cheaper boarding-houses. It was probable that Doyle was spending recess at college. Just the thing—he would call on Doyle!

It was not until he was half-way down-stairs that he remembered the book. He went back for it, two steps at a time. Out in the street, with the fluffy flakes against his face, he felt better. After all, there was no use in getting grouchy over his disappointment; Phil would keep; and so would Phil's sister, at least until Easter; or, better yet, he would get Phil to take him home with him over Sunday some time. He was passing the shops now, and stopped before a jeweler's window, his eye caught by a rather jolly-looking paper-knife in gun-metal. He had made his purchases for Christmas and had already despatched them, but the paper-knife looked attractive and, if there was no one to give it to, he could keep it himself. So he passed into the shop, and purchased it.

"Put it into a box, will you?" he requested. "I may want to send it away."

Out on the avenue again, his thoughts reverted to his prospective host. The visit had elements of humor. He had known Doyle at preparatory school, and since then, at college, had maintained the acquaintance in a casual way. He liked Doyle, always had, just as any man must like an honest, earnest, gentlemanly fellow, whether their paths run parallel or cross only at rare intervals. He and Doyle were not at all in the same coterie. Satherwaite's friends were the richest, and sometimes the laziest, men in college; Doyle's were—well, presumably men who, like himself, had only enough money to scrape through from September to June, who studied hard for degrees, whose viewpoint of university life must, of necessity, be widely separated from Satherwaite's. As for visiting Doyle, Satherwaite could not remember ever having been in his room but once, and that was long ago, in their Freshman year.

Satherwaite had to climb two flights of steep and very narrow stairs, and when he stood at Doyle's door, he thought he must have made a mistake. From within came the sounds of very unstudious revelry, laughter, a snatch of song, voices raised in good-natured argument. Satherwaite referred again to the fly-leaf of the note-book; there was no error. He knocked and, in obedience to a cheery, "Come in!" entered.

He found himself in a small study, shabbily furnished, but cheerful and homelike by reason of the leaping flames in the grate and the blue haze of tobacco-smoke, that almost hid its farther wall. About the room sat six men, their pipes held questioningly away from their mouths and their eyes fixed wonderingly, half-resentfully, upon the intruder. But what caught and held Satherwaite's gaze was a tiny Christmas tree, scarcely three feet high, which adorned the centre of the desk. Its branches held toy candles, as yet unlighted, and were festooned with strings of crimson cranberries and colored pop-

corn, while here and there a small package dangled amid the greenery.

"How are you, Satherwaite?"

Doyle, tall, lank and near-sighted, arose and moved forward, with outstretched hand. He was plainly embarrassed, as was every other occupant of the study, Satherwaite included. The laughter and talk had subsided. Doyle's guests politely removed their gaze from the new-comer, and returned their pipes to their lips. But the new-comer was intruding, and knew it, and he was consequently embarrassed. Embarrassment, like boredom, was a novel sensation to him, and he speedily decided that he did not fancy it. He held out Doyle's book.

"I brought this back, old man. I don't know how I came to forget it. I'm awfully sorry, you know; it was so very decent of you to lend it to me. Awfully sorry, really."

Doyle murmured that it didn't matter, not a particle; and wouldn't Satherwaite sit down?

No, Satherwaite couldn't stop. He heard the youth in the faded cricket-blazer tell the man next to him, in a stage aside, that this was, "Satherwaite, '02, an awful swell, you know." Satherwaite again declared that he could not remain.

Doyle said he was sorry; they were just having a little—a sort of a Christmas-eve party, you know. He blushed while he explained, and wondered whether Satherwaite thought them a lot of idiots, or simply a parcel of sentimental kids. Probably, Satherwaite knew some of the fellows? he went on.

Satherwaite studied the assemblage, and replied that he thought not, though he remembered having seen several of them at lectures and things. Doyle made no move toward introducing his friends to Satherwaite, and, to relieve the momentary silence that followed, observed that he supposed it was getting colder. Satherwaite replied, absently, that he hadn't noticed, but that it was still snowing. The youth in the cricket-blazer fid-

geted in his chair. Satherwaite was thinking.

Of course, he was not wanted there; he realized that. Yet, he was of half a mind to stay. The thought of his empty room dismayed him. The cheer and comfort before him appealed to him forcibly. And, more than all, he was possessed of a desire to vindicate himself to this circle of narrow-minded critics. Great Scott! just because he had some money and went with some other fellows who also had money, he was to be promptly labeled "cad," and treated with polite tolerance only. By Jove, he would stay, if only to punish them for their narrowness!

"You're sure I sha'n't be intruding, Doyle?" he asked.

Doyle gasped in amazement. Satherwaite removed his coat. A shiver of consternation passed through the room. Then the host found his tongue.

"Glad to have you. Nothing much doing. Few friends. Quiet evening. Let me take your coat."

Introductions followed. The man in the cricket-blazer turned out to be Doak, '03, the man who had won the Jonas Greeve scholarship; a small youth with eagle-like countenance was Somers, he who had debated so brilliantly against Princeton; a much-bewhiskered man was Ailworth, of the Law School; Kranch and Smith, both members of Satherwaite's class, completed the party. Satherwaite shook hands with those within reach, and looked for a chair. Instantly, every one was on his feet; there was a confused chorus of, "Take this, won't you?" Satherwaite accepted a straight-backed chair with part of its cane seat missing, after a decent amount of protest; then a heavy, discouraging silence fell. Satherwaite looked around the circle. Every one save Ailworth and Doyle was staring blankly at the fire. Ailworth dropped his eyes, gravely; Doyle broke out explosively with:

"Do you smoke, Satherwaite?"

"Yes, but I'm afraid—" he searched

his pockets, perfunctorily—"I haven't my pipe with me." His cigarette-case met his searching fingers, but somehow cigarettes did not seem appropriate.

"I'm sorry," said Doyle, "but I'm afraid I haven't an extra one. Any of you fellows got a pipe that's not working?"

Murmured regrets followed. Doak, who sat next to Satherwaite, put a hand in his coat pocket, and viewed the intruder doubtfully, from around the corners of his glasses.

"It doesn't matter a bit," remarked Satherwaite, heartily.

"I've got a sort of a pipe here," said Doak, "if you're not over particular what you smoke."

Satherwaite received the pipe gravely. It was a blackened briar, whose bowl was burned half-way down on one side, from being lighted over the gas, and whose mouthpiece, gnawed away in long usage, had been re-shaped with a knife. Satherwaite examined it with interest, rubbing the bowl gently on his knee. He knew, without seeing, that Doak was eying him with mingled defiance and apology, and wondering in what manner a man who was used to meerschaums and gold-mounted briars would take the proffer of his worn-out favorite; and he knew, too, that all the others were watching. He placed the stem between his lips, and drew on it once or twice, with satisfaction.

"It seems a jolly old pipe," he said; "I fancy you must be rather fond of it. Has any one got any 'baccy?"

Five pouches were tendered instantly.

Satherwaite filled his pipe, carefully. He had won the first trick, he told himself, and the thought was pleasurable. The conversation had started up again, but it was yet perfunctory, and Satherwaite realized that he was still an outsider. Doyle gave him the opportunity he wanted.

"Isn't it something new for you to stay here through recess?" he asked.

Then Satherwaite told about Phil's Aunt Louise and the telegram; about

his dismal dinner at the restaurant and the subsequent flight from the tomb-like silence of the club; how he had decided, in desperation, to clean up his study, and how he had come across Doyle's note-book. He told it rather well; he had a reputation for that sort of thing, and to-night he did his best. He pictured himself to his audience on the verge of suicide from melancholia, and assured them that this fate had been averted only through his dislike of being found lifeless amid such untidy surroundings. He decked the narrative with touches of drollery, and was rewarded with the grins that overspread the faces of his hearers. Ailworth nodded appreciatingly, now and then, and Doak even slapped his knee once and giggled aloud. Satherwaite left out all mention of Phil's sister, naturally, and ended with:

"And so, when I saw you fellows having such a Christian, comfortable sort of a time, I simply couldn't break away again. I knew I was risking getting myself heartily disliked, and, really, I wouldn't blame you if you arose *en masse* and kicked me out. But I am desperate. Give me some tobacco from time to time, and just let me sit here and listen to you; it will be a kindly act to a homeless orphan."

"Shut up!" said Doyle, heartily; "we're glad to have you, of course." The others concurred. "We—we're going to light up the tree after a bit. We do it every year, you know. It's kind of—of Christmassy when you don't get home for the holidays, you see. We give one another little presents and—and have rather a bit of fun out of it. Only—" he hesitated, doubtfully—"only, I'm afraid it may bore you awfully."

"Bore me!" cried Satherwaite; "why, man alive, I should think it would be the jolliest sort of a thing. It's just like being boys again." He turned and observed the tiny tree with interest. "And do you mean that you all give one another presents, and keep it secret, and—and all that?"

"Yes; just little things, you know," answered Doak, deprecatingly.

"It's the nearest thing to a real Christmas that I've known for seven years," said Ailworth, gravely. Satherwaite observed him, wonderingly.

"By Jove!" he murmured; "seven years! Do you know, I'm glad now I am going home, instead of to Sterner's for Christmas. A fellow ought to be with his own folks, don't you think?"

Everybody said, yes, heartily, and there was a moment of silence in the room. Presently, Kranch, whose home was in Michigan, began speaking reminiscently of the Christmases he had spent when a lad in the pine woods. He made the others feel the cold and the magnitude of the pictures he drew, and, for a space, Satherwaite was transported to a little lumber town in a clearing, and stood by excitedly, while a small boy in jeans drew woolen mittens—wonderful ones of red and gray—from out a Christmas stocking. And Somers told of a Christmas he had once spent in a Quebec village; and Ailworth followed him with an account of Christmas morning in a Maine-coast fishing town.

Satherwaite was silent. He had no Christmases of his own to tell about; they would have been sorry, indeed, after the others; Christmases in a big Philadelphia house, rather staid and stupid days, as he remembered them now, days lacking in any delightful element of uncertainty, but filled with wonderful presents so numerous that the novelty had worn away from them ere bedtime. He felt that, somehow, he had been cheated out of a pleasure which should have been his.

The tobacco-pouches went from hand to hand. Christmas-giving had already begun; and Satherwaite, to avoid disappointing his new friends, had to smoke many more pipes than was good for him. Suddenly, they found themselves in darkness, save for the fire-light. Doyle had arisen stealthily and turned out the gas. Then, one by one, the tiny candles flickered and flared bluely into flame. Some one pulled the shades from before the two windows, and the room was hushed. Outside, they could see the flakes falling,

silently, steadily, between them and the electric lights that shone across the avenue. It was a beautiful, cold, still world of blue mists. A gong clanged softly, and a car, well-nigh untenanted, slid by beneath them, its windows, frosted half-way up, flooding the snow with mellow light. Some one beside Satherwaite murmured, gently:

"Good old Christmas!"

The spell was broken. Satherwaite sighed—why, he hardly knew—and turned away from the window. The tree was brilliantly lighted now, and the strings of cranberries caught the beams ruddily. Doak stirred the fire, and Doyle, turning from a whispered consultation with some of the others, approached Satherwaite.

"Would you mind playing Santa Claus—give out the presents, you know; we always do it that way."

Satherwaite would be delighted; and, better to impersonate that famous old gentleman, he turned up the collar of his jacket, and put each hand up the opposite sleeve, looking as benignant as possible the while.

"That's fine!" cried Smith; "but hold on, you need a cap."

He seized one from the window-seat, a worn thing of yellowish-brown otter, and drew it down over Satherwaite's ears. The crowd applauded, merrily.

"Dear little boys and girls," began Satherwaite, in a quavering voice.

"No girls!" cried Doak.

"I want the cranberries!" cried Smith; "I love cranberries."

"I get the pop-corn, then!" That was the sedate Ailworth.

"You'll be beastly sick," said Doak, grinning jovially through his glasses.

Satherwaite untied the first package from its twig. It bore the inscription, "For Little Willie Kranch." Every one gathered around while the recipient undid the wrappings, and laid bare a pen-wiper adorned with a tiny crimson football. Doak explained to Satherwaite that Kranch had played football just once, on a scrub team, and had heroically carried the ball down a long field, and placed it triumphantly

under his own goal posts. This accounted for the laughter that ensued.

"Sammy Doak" received a note-book marked, "Mathematics 3a." The point of this allusion was lost to Satherwaite, for Doak was too busy laughing to explain it. And so it went, and the room was in a constant roar of mirth. Doyle was conferring excitedly with Ailworth across the room. By-and-bye, he stole forward, and, detaching one of the packages from the tree, erased and wrote on it with great secrecy. Then he tied it back again, and retired to the hearth, grinning expectantly, until his own name was called, and he was shoved forward to receive a rubber pen-holder.

Presently, Satherwaite, working around the Christmas tree, detached a package, and frowned over the address.

"Fellows, this looks like—like Satherwaite, but—" he viewed the assemblage in embarrassment—"but I fancy it's a mistake."

"Not a bit," cried Doyle; "that's just my writing."

"Open it!" cried the others, thronging up to him.

Satherwaite obeyed, wondering. Within the wrappers was a pocket memorandum book, a simple thing of cheap red leather. Some one laughed, uncertainly. Satherwaite, very red, ran his finger over the edges of the leaves, examined it long, as though he had never seen anything like it before, and placed it in his waistcoat pocket.

"I—I—" he began.

"Chop it off!" cried some one, joyously.

"I'm awfully much obliged to—to whoever—"

"It's from the gang," said Doyle.

"With a Merry Christmas," said Ailworth.

"Thank you—gang," said Satherwaite.

The distribution went on, but presently, when all the rest were crowding about Somers, Satherwaite whipped a package from his pocket and, writing on it hurriedly, was apparently in the

act of taking it from the tree, when the others turned again.

"'Little Harry Doyle,'" he read, gravely.

Doyle viewed the package in amazement. He had dressed the tree himself.

"Open it up, old man!"

When he saw the gun-metal paper-knife, he glanced quickly at Satherwaite. He was very red in the face. Satherwaite smiled back, imperturbably. The knife went from hand to hand, awakening enthusiastic admiration.

"But, I say, old man, who gave—?" began Smith.

"I'm awfully much obliged, Satherwaite," said Doyle, "but, really, I couldn't think of taking——"

"Chop it off!" echoed Satherwaite. "Look here, Doyle, it isn't the sort of thing I'd give you from choice; it's a useless sort of toy, but I just happened to have it with me; bought it in the square on the way to give to some one, I didn't know who, and so, if you don't mind, I wish you'd accept it, you know. It'll do to put on the table or—open cans with. If you'd rather not take it, why, chuck it out of the window!"

"It isn't that," cried Doyle; "it's only that it's much too fine——"

"Oh, no, it isn't," said Satherwaite. "Now, then, where's 'Little Alfie Ailworth'?"

Small candy canes followed the packages, and the men drew once more around the hearth, munching the pink and white confectionery, enjoyingly. Smith insisted upon having the cranberries, and wore them around his neck. The pop-corn was distributed equally, and the next day, in the parlor-car Satherwaite drew his from a pocket together with his handkerchief.

Some one struck up a song, and Doyle remembered that Satherwaite had been in the Glee Club. There was an instant clamor for a song, and Satherwaite, consenting, looked about the room.

"Haven't any thump-box," said Smith. "Can't you go it alone?"

Satherwaite thought he could, and did. He had a rich tenor voice, and he sang all the songs he knew. When it could be done, by hook or by crook, the others joined in the chorus; not too loudly, for it was getting late and proctors have sharp ears. When the last refrain had been repeated for the third time, and silence reigned for the moment, they heard the bell in the near-by tower. They counted its strokes; eight—nine—ten—eleven—twelve.

"Merry Christmas, all!" cried Smith.

In the clamor that ensued, Satherwaite secured his coat and hat. He shook hands all around. Smith insisted upon sharing the cranberries with him, and so looped a string gracefully about his neck. When Satherwaite backed out the door, he still held Doak's pet pipe clenched between his teeth, and Doak, knowing it, said not a word.

"Hope you'll come back and see us," called Doyle.

"That's right, old man, don't forget us!" shouted Ailworth.

And Satherwaite, promising again and again not to, stumbled his way down the dark stairs.

Outside, he glanced gratefully up at the lighted panes. Then he grinned, and, scooping a handful of snow, sent it fairly against the glass. Instantly, the windows banged up, and six heads thrust themselves out.

"Good night! Merry Christmas, old man! Happy New Year!"

Something smashed softly against Satherwaite's cheek. He looked back. They were gathering snow from the ledges and throwing snow-balls after him.

"Good shot!" he called. "Merry Christmas!"

The sound of their cries and laughter followed him far down the avenue.



FIRST VOLCANO—Judging by that island you made, you've been exercising.
SECOND VOLCANO—Oh, no; that was only a bluff.

FILLING THE STOCKING

YOU with a dainty foot,
 You with a trim knee,
 If it were not for soot
 Choking the chimney,
 Santa Claus I would be,
 At your door knocking,
 Asking just once to see
 One silken stocking.

Under the mantel, where,
 Doubtless, you pin it,
 I should espy it there—
 Not a thing in it;
 Then, in the hush of night,
 Mine it would be to
 Fill it, and bring delight
 To you—and me, too.

Roses and rhymes and rings
 I have to put there,
 Yet none of all these things
 Could match your foot there.
 Yours are poetic feet,
 And, as for roses,
 One in your stocking neat
 Often reposes.

So let old Santa Claus
 Stick to his duty;
 I give it up—because
 Chimneys are sooty.
 Stockings he fills, I grant,
 As but a few can;
 But I am sure he can't
 Fill yours as *you* can!

FELIX CARMEN.



THE BEST SHE COULD DO

HE—Could you marry a man who spends all he makes?
 SHE—No; but I could love him while it lasted.

COUNT OGURI'S QUEST

By Onoto Watanna

DESPITE his course at an American college, Count Oguri was a temperamental pariah. While he desired keenly to live upon terms of social intimacy with many persons, and while, not infrequently, he himself had made advances, there was that in his manner tending to the ultimate overthrow of all such ambitions. There was a diffidence in his mental attitude that led, not only to an embarrassed manner, but gave, as well, the appearance and qualities of a marplot. Oguri had lain awake long to plan, in detail, some interview or meeting that was to bring him the friendship of Cullen, the full-back, or Wright, "the star debater," and, having settled the minutiae of proper familiarity with his associates, had gone down to breakfast, only to ask for the salt in a tone of voice that instantly attracted to himself the full gaze of the tableful.

He could not analyze the situation lucidly enough to determine just why they stared; they themselves could not have told, but he and they both realized that there was a strained something in his voice to confound him and to startle them. Then, for days, he would refrain from asking for anything, the experience of the one occasion vitiating the resolution of a fortnight.

When Count Oguri had again fought himself up to the proper pitch of pitiful daring, he would attempt the interviews. But, at the slightest evidence in the individual of that collective stare over the salt incident, his courage would evaporate

into mere nervous giddiness. The incident would be reported duly by the sought-for one, and would take its place in the archives of accusation against the good-fellowship of Count Oguri.

Such was the temperamental impediment of Oguri, and, when it is added that he was a Japanese, the second element in the dissatisfaction that Oguri aroused is stated. Friends were kept away by his dispositional failing, as well as because of his nationality.

Then, too, the understanding of Count Oguri, while easily outstripping that of his contemporaries in the taking to itself of the principles and facts of sciences and languages, could not admit unto itself any comprehension of characteristic student customs.

When a group of sophomores entered the rooms of the "Jap Slimer," for the purpose of imparting to his "benighted Oriental understanding some slight compendium and illustrated appendix of the college custom of hazing," Oguri could not recognize his urgent need of it.

"My pagan friend," said a sophomore, "you must prove your ability as a 'Slimer,' by drinking this bottle of milk and singing that classical ditty, 'I'm a Pea-green Freshman.'"

The Japanese leaped to a pair of iron dumb-bells lying in a corner. "What you call this?" he shouted. "You call this civilization? I call it barbarism."

Then, without further words, Count Oguri attacked his enemies, swinging the iron objects with long reach, and

with the earnest purpose of clearing the room, or of killing an enemy. He cleared the room.

After that, the sophomores let him alone, giving him up as one without a sense of humor. His classmates, however, discerning in this act a germ of class spirit, decided suddenly that they had misjudged the grim-featured Japanese. They called upon him in bodies. Again Oguri was afforded an opportunity of getting on with his fellows, but again did the shyness and diffidence of his disposition declare themselves his enemies. His classmates concluded that his act of bravado was animal instinct brought to bay, and not calculated class spirit. His own eagerly desirous personality had remained embarrassedly in the background. No one discerned that he wished to be a good-fellow before everything, but could not show it.

College life has no toleration for the man who, as a freshman, cannot conform to its traditions, and to the unpopularity Oguri's temperament brought was added a measure of college displeasure. He was doubly cut off from his fellows' inner life; nevertheless, he did not think of leaving the college. He was bent upon becoming as American as possible, and this early failure did not deter him from going on with his course.

It was observed, during his next year, that Count Oguri, unlike many who had objected vigorously to hazing as freshmen, took no title to his privilege of hazing in turn those whom time had placed beneath his academic feet. In his last two years, when upper-classman rank gave him authority over under-classmen, he used the higher rank and its perquisites only to protect some unhappy freshman.

When Count Oguri, in accord with his Americanizing intention, left the collegiate hill where four highly fruitful, if unhappy, years had added their touch of development, and took his bachelor apartment on Fifth avenue, he thought with joy that his outcast

state was at an end. Here he could make a new beginning. He would put aside all his American past with his enemies and acquaintances—for there was none he called friend—he would even drop the almost repellent attitude, assumed during his last college term, and again approach the world in a spirit of fellowship. If no other way presented itself, his title and wealth would open a way into a society which, though perhaps *bourgeois* and sordid, must contain, almost against its will, the one man or woman who should be that thing he had dreamed of always, but never possessed, a friend.

With his general cleansing of old linen and putting off of old garments, he had decided to include his late associates. His entrance into the new world that streamed past his windows in carriages and automobiles, that surged by on the sidewalks, and that stretched out in fashionable brownstone as far as his roving eye could discern—his entrance into this world, which, perchance, contained for him its simple and single point of sympathy, should be due to none of those who had misunderstood him. A way would open itself, of that he was assured.

A way did open itself, but in a fashion quite foreign to the imaginings of Count Oguri. One morning, his valet laid before him a sealed envelope, with his name inscribed in feminine strokes. Oguri held it in doubting fingers.

"I feel," he told himself, "that there is something within that packet which will have its influence upon my future."

Still he toyed with it, taking delight in painting its possibilities. Then, with a sudden movement, he tore it open. Count Oguri was invited to send his cheque in payment for the inclosed tickets admitting the bearer into the inner temples of a famous hotel. The occasion was a gathering of fashionables, whose ultimate idea was exclusiveness, though there was a side suggestion of charity. Decidedly, wealth and fashion had sought out Oguri.

The count sent his cheque. There followed closely upon this event a season when his temperamental difficulties were overlooked by those who paid him attention. If he nervously chattered in his idiomatic English, he was made to feel that they thought him charming, witty. If the silence of embarrassment came to the relief of his fluttering tongue, he was graced with a high-caste reserve of manner. Oguri, before whose eyes the newly-kindled fires of sycophancy shone too brilliantly for clear sight, was momentarily dazzled and deceived.

"I am losing, at last, that pitiful uncertainty, that honorable palsy which afflicted me," he thought. "Now I am myself; I am liked for myself."

He sighed with something he took to be satisfaction.

"But have I found complete sympathy?" he inquired of himself.

He knew he had not. Yet these people seemed to like him for his personal qualities; they seemed to desire his company.

After a dance in a two-streeted, two-named establishment, Oguri and a young fellow, whom some recent ingenuous "street" operation had embittered, found themselves in the Hyphen café for a parting stimulant.

"It's a miserable, hollow show, this seeming to enjoy yourself," sighed Oguri's vis-à-vis.

The Japanese was puzzled. "What is?" he asked.

"Oh, this social game. It's heartless and all for a profit."

The young man spoke bitterly.

In his partially awakened joy of life, the Japanese felt that he could aid the other. He said:

"No, my friend, it is not that. Take my case. Once, I was bitter against men; I wanted to be upon good terms, but they wouldn't understand me; now, I have lots of friends who want nothing."

"Don't they, though?" The other was gulping down his carbonic and whiskey. "You wait!"

"Wait?"

"Just wait a week. I've been ob-

serving your case. I see signs of its coming due in less time than that—three days."

"I do not understand you. That, perhaps—" Oguri indicated the bottle at the other's hand.

The man became nettled.

"Why, don't you know," he exclaimed, "that there are men up there"—his finger was jerked vaguely toward the ceiling in the ball-room's direction—"who want to become well acquainted, only in order to rob you through some fake companies; want to swindle you out of your money? And don't you know that there are women—?"

"No, no, no!"

"Why, there are plenty of women there that for your title and money would marry—even you!"

"Am I so repulsive then that you say, 'even me'?"

The other looked him squarely in the eye, with the brutality of the American who has passed through several castes within a short time.

"Well, you're hardly our most esteemed type of beauty," he drawled.

The frankness of this man's bad manners destroyed for Count Oguri any value his note of warning might have had. He was only annoyed, not angry, and still less convinced of his friends' ulterior motives.

Yet, the time came when Oguri was again forced to consider himself an outcast. It was after several men had approached him for loans or investments, and a number of women had caused the idea to penetrate his consciousness that wealth is universally appreciated by women, and that a dark husband does not lessen the value of a title, be the land of that title as far away in distance and imagination as Japan from America.

Then the old bitterness of disposition fell darkly about Oguri. For a time, his emotions were numbed through its operations. As the warmth of his own inner flame thawed him out, a light flashed across his purposes. He reasoned thus:

"All my life long I have sought

sympathy. I was ready to give it to others, but selfishly, merely that I might in turn obtain it. I have been selfish. I will devote myself to the study of my fellow-man. Then shall I find sympathy and happiness." He paused. "Ah, there it is again," he exclaimed. "I seek happiness selfishly, through unselfishness! No; I shall seek an interest in affairs that others may be happy, and, if by the way I myself find happiness, it shall be not my motive, but my incidental reward."

During the days of his social appearances, Oguri had come in contact with a number of persons who were unselfish, so far as the limitations of their natures permitted. They had asked him for contributions for this or that East Side work, or for a fund for the benefit of this or that dependent class. They had accepted his cheques with a real sense of gratitude, but still without any measure of understanding or sympathy for him. They were moral examples, but their very goodness made them too narrow to entertain other than the merest surface feeling for one of alien race.

His new plan of life led Count Oguri to continue his subscriptions to their worthy activities. A young student of sociology, in need of funds to extend his course, managed to find him out. In this way Oguri became a benefactor. Yet he ever remained a pariah. The influences of his past life were too recent upon him, and had made him too analytical to enjoy his occupation. Still, with his old-time persistence, he swung along his course, fairly kicking himself along the path of altruism. In time, this brought him a share of newspaper attention. "The Japanese philanthropist" was a picturesque object for the imaginations of reporters.

One day, as a member of the visitors' committee, he was urged to visit the island where the waifs of a metropolis were housed. Oguri was not eager to go, but his firm conscience, molded out of the morbid materials thrown up by constant introspection,

would not permit him to decline. He went.

When Count Oguri, with the large party of his associates, entered the foundling asylum, and saw on the lower floor rows of tiny tables but a few inches from the ground, with chairs about large enough for a doll, he felt a new interest. The diminutive, the natural expression of affection, appealed to him, emotional outcast as he was, in a way to defy his most searching analysis. Yes, he was glad he had sometimes made a contribution that had helped a child.

On the floor above, the entire party was admitted to a ward in which were the youngest foundlings, though none in the place was more than two years old. Nurses were few. On the floor a number of the larger infants were at feeble play. There were a few faded playthings, the common property of this poor childhood.

The entrance of the visiting party set the ward into instant commotion. From healthy, young and weak throats, at once went up a wail. There was a pause of irresolution upon the part of the invaders. A little girl, standing still in the centre of the room, dropped her faded rag doll, and stared about her with perfect self-possession. Then, while the visitors stood motionless, she walked directly, if unsteadily, to Count Oguri. At his knees, she paused; her hand reached up to him; her lips made a sound of kissing.

"I lub you," she said.

Oguri, dumb and amazed, stared at her. The nurse hurried forward.

"She's quite a noticing child," the woman said; "she picked you out because you're so dark and foreign-looking."

"Oh," said Oguri, as he turned coldly away.

The visiting party's stay was brief, but, during its continuance, the little girl kept her eyes riveted on Oguri. Only the nurse's attention kept her away from the Japanese.

The party left the ward through the winding corridor, Oguri in the rear.

Just before a turn hid him from the child's view, Oguri looked back.

The little girl had followed him to the door, beyond whose limits the discipline of the place had taught her not to go.

A childish foot struck the floor with childish insistence.

"Turn back," a childish voice called, passionately, as the little girl pointed insistently to her faded rag doll.

It was an appeal straight to the heart of Oguri. It reached him. With quick strides, he went back. The child was in his arms. Within him, all the bitterness of the past melted in the tears that streamed down his face.

"I lub you," whispered a little voice.

Here, at last, was the sympathy, the love he had sought. It had come to him; it was his forever.

With the child in his arms, the Japanese turned to the laughing group that had come back to see the issue.

"What are you going to do with the child, count?" asked a woman.

"Adopt her. She is mine for this world and the next," he said, solemnly.

Three days later, the Japanese consul was called upon to arrange that Count Oguri might return to his native Nippon with his little heiress, and the matter was finally settled.

"What, before all the gods, Count Oguri, are you to do with an American child over there?" asked the mystified consul at the railroad station.

Oguri eased the little girl's position in his arms, before he answered. Then:

"To teach her two things—without which all are destitute in body, and outcasts in soul—sympathy and love."



LOVE'S SACRAMENT

THE sweet intoxicant of dew and dawn
On the young, luring mouth of Day, has gone;
Gone is the scarlet of noon's lustful fire,
Exultant in the vintage of desire.

See, now the chalice of the sun low dips,
And lingers at the twilight's parted lips,
Until the dripping lees of amber wine
Stain richly on her breast's dim-shadowed line.

I am the twilight, love, and thou, the sun;
Give me thy golden heart till day is done;
Into my spirit, hollowed to thy will,
Fling thou the elements thy fires distil.

EMERY POTTLE.



"WE must be approaching Boston," said the guest to the automobilist.
"Although I am by this time totally blind, I recognize the taste of the Boston dust."

SIC TRANSIT

I MET her not in dewy fields, 'mid grain or nodding clover;
 'Twas on an elevated train that first I learned to love her.
 Since then I've lived, a heartless man. You wonder at my frown?
 Alas! her train was going up, and mine was going down!

Just my ideal—so tall and fair! for me she was intended.
 A thrill, a smile, our glances met, and then our courtship ended.
 Those eyes! Was ever sky so blue? That hair! That dimpled mouth!—
 But here I pause; she'd started North, and I was going South!

I've waited long; I've watched for her in country, town and street,
 But all in vain; I wonder now if up above we'll meet,
 And whether it will be the same beyond the crowded town.
 Ah, yes! for she'll be going up, and I'll be going down!

LOIS MUIRHEAD.



CERTAINLY IS

HOGAN—I'll tell you a good idea for a story.
 SCRIBBLER—What?
 "Don't write one."



"DOES Mrs. Lee powder?"
 "Powder! Why, to kiss her would be like eating a marsh-mallow!"



PUZZLING

THEY call her plain;
 The reason why
 I cannot see,
 Because she's I!

G. E. MEREDITH.



"SHE'S awfully old-fashioned! she believes in long engagements."
 "Worse than that! she believes in long marriages."

“ALL THAT GLITTERS”

By Katharine Pelton

IT was a stormy February afternoon, when, from an exhausting round of calls, I came home utterly worn out. I sank gratefully into the easy-chair that my little maid rolled before the fire in my boudoir. While she knelt to replace my patent-leather boots with furred slippers, she purred to me sympathetically, in her pretty, broken English.

“Madame will be soon rested! I shall prepare the hot bran-bath that madame so like; and then she will take a little glass of the so-good cordial, while I shall arrange the coiffure before monsieur will come.” Celeste is one of the chief compensations of my present life.

Was I ever so tired in the old, hard-working days before my brilliant marriage? Then it was a frolic for Betty and me to put on our white gloves, fresh from the cleaner’s, and stand, clinging to a strap, in some crowded, stuffy street-car on our way to and from rich people’s “at homes.” When we got back to the little fourth-story room in the boarding-house, we were never too tired to make a story or a play out of the absurd and pompous things we had heard and seen. Poor Betty! How she cried when she found her new and only presentable frock ruined by the bouillon some one’s butler had spilled on it! It meant retirement from “society” all the rest of that Winter to poor little Betty.

“The coachman has send to madame to ask if she will excuse her horses to-night. It has snow very much, and he have fear for the lame foots of the mare. He say he shall

himself conduct the livery horses, when madame shall go to the dinner to-night.”

Ah, yes; I had forgotten for a few blissful moments — Uncle Eliphalet Davis’s big dinner! That was, of course, why Celeste had arranged my hair so elaborately, as I sat and dreamed and sipped my *bénédictine*.

The Davises give two distinct sets of dinners.

Uncle Eliphalet Davis is at the head of a great importing firm; and, at certain seasons of the year, the Continental houses that he represents send over their junior partners and younger sons, on the pretext of getting in touch with American business methods.

A more shocking set of young reprobrates it might be hard to find; certainly, they are the only clever men ever to be met beneath the deadly respectable roof-tree of the Davises. Doubtless, these exemplary youths demand much entertainment of a more congenial variety; but, at least once during their stay, Uncle Eliphalet considers it proper to ask them to dine at his own sacred board. To meet them are invited a few artistic and literary paupers, whose knowledge of the foreign tongue serves to make these occasions bearable to the visitors; although the same persons’ poverty, and superiority of wit and manner, rigorously exclude them from Mrs. Eliphalet Davis’s “set.”

When Uncle Eliphalet found that I spoke French with some skill and great fearlessness, I was ordered, like the *entrées* and flowers, for the annual banquet to these foreigners. Later,

Betty was also bidden; for she was a beauty—and, besides, when we came together it spared Uncle Elph the expense of sending us home in a cab, for under mutual escort we could vanish beyond his hospitable portal into the convenient and economical street-car.

I confess that, for days after we received our invitation, Betty and I used to speculate greedily on the probable menu of that dinner. When we sat down to our luncheons of smoked beef, creamed codfish, ginger wafers and stewed prunes: "Birds!" I would whisper cheerily to my Betty, as she vainly tried to partake of the boarding-house fare. "Birds, broiled mushrooms, dry champagne, maybe—strawberries, my child. Courage! It's only three days to wait!"

Betty, lifting a stone-china tea-cup with the delicate fingers that, even then, seemed so frail and transparent, would respond, gaily: "And don't forget the Bohemian glass and the Coalport plates, and the real live roses and orchids in the centre!"

My dainty, fairy princess, whose very being hungered and thirsted for beauty! My little Betty—would that I might share with you to-day the pleasant things my money buys! But whom the gods love, they take away; and they wanted you, my little sister—even, perhaps, as I want you now.

Uncle Eliphalet Davis also gives another set of dinners, more costly even, to a number of elect beings registered in the inner and exclusive pages of Mrs. Davis's visiting-book.

From the doubtful joys of the bohemian banquets, before mentioned, my marriage to Danforth Carleton forever removed me, promoting me to the circle of railroad magnates and multi-millionaires enthroned as leaders in what the Sunday newspapers term, "the social world." Until my first dinner of this class, I had never dreamed how detestably one can be bored, and I await its semi-annual occurrence with real dread.

At these awful functions, we sit for two hours or more, trifling with costly

and unseasonable viands, for which not one of us has any appetite; and every one is very polite and very dull. We laugh, occasionally, little mirthless shrieks—at some obviously "funny story," or we giggle, in a refined and cultivated manner, at the elephantine persiflage between husbands and wives that is a regular feature of the programme. My husband, being born and bred to high life, has been schooled to endure these select functions with patience, but I shall always at heart be an alien to them.

Some rebellious thoughts were lingering in my mind, when Dan appeared in a long brocade dressing-gown, the top of his head still sleek and moist from his tub, for his customary lounge by my boudoir fire, before we were obliged to dress for our departure.

My husband waited, punctiliously, until Celeste had withdrawn, before he kissed me; then he flung himself on the low couch, and took out his cigarette-case.

"If you will allow me," he said, with the grand air that is perfectly natural to him, though, when I first met him, it struck me as stagey.

"If you would only allow me!" I thought, silently, but hopelessly. I have given up smoking since my marriage. Dan's horror at the idea of any of his women-folk indulging in the weed is pathetic.

"Half an hour of comfort before me!" sighed Dan, luxuriously. His evening clothes, I knew, he had arranged methodically in his dressing-room, ready to don in a very few minutes' time. Some wives, they say, make this a sort of religious rite to be performed by no hand but their own. I tried arranging his evening things for Dan once, taking good care to leave traces of my struggles around the studs and cuff-links, and beamed with artless, wifely pride as I exhibited my work. The result was successful beyond my wildest hopes. Obviously fearful of hurting my feelings by seeming ingratitude, Dan offered

to subscribe fifty dollars to my pet charity, then gently begged me never to take such trouble again, under any circumstances.

As I crossed the room to get my manicure powder, Dan held out his hand to me with that mute, boyish adoration in his eyes that has often come near to winning my love, which, together with the recollection of the struggle I escaped by marrying a year ago, renders my life bearable. So, I pulled a cushion to the floor by the lounge, and seated myself where Dan could play with the little curls on my neck. I think it wise to encourage a man in these moods.

He became much interested in my manipulation of the ivory and gold polisher. Dan's hands are his only beauty, and he knows it; or, rather, he knows they are very handsome. It would be too much to expect a man to realize that he has but one perfect feature; though, all things considered, Dan is far from vain, as men go.

A man of my husband's wealth and position, though his natural endowments may be few, may, at least, be termed "distinguished" by the people who fawn upon him; but I, being Danforth Carleton's wife, see clearly that he is a somewhat commonplace individual. But I can admire his strong, white hands, beside which my little one seemed so babyish and weak, as I laid it in his palm.

"What a useless article it looks!" I said, laughing up into his eyes. I never have ceased coquetting with my husband—a point I wonder women do not more generally score. It is so easy; and, when it goes so far to preserve a man's interest in other women generally, why not sustain a flirtation at home? And then, besides, it keeps one in practice.

"It's a very powerful one," responded Dan, fatuously, with a little stage by-play. "Do you know, little girl, every one tells me you have grown handsomer of late? Of course, I can't see how that is possible!"

"Wealth and position agree with me, Dan. I was getting to be an old

spinster, wrinkled and cross and worried, when I met you, hapless victim! My naturally angelic disposition was turning bitter and suspicious in the fight for daily bread. I like buttered muffins better, and they agree with me. You are a very good old boy, Cræsus." I made a fretful, anxious face. "Before marriage," I explained, fancifully. Then I assumed my most honeyed smile and gracious manner. "Charmed to see you, Mrs. Grundy!" said I. "That's the effect of muffins and millinery and a place in the Blue Book!"

My husband shouted with amusement, as, fortunately, he considers me a very witty person. "You'd have made a hit on the stage!" he gasped.

Just then a hurdy-gurdy, somewhere down in the street, began to whine out the old "Cavalleria" intermezzo. How I loathe that tune! I never hear it but poor Bob Thorne's face, with its wistful eyes and set, white mouth, as I saw it last, flashes before me. Ah, but I couldn't help it, dear! People aren't happy in real life, at least that way, Bob. Love in a cottage will not last, and, even if love in a palace doesn't pay—well, give me the palace.

"Why so suddenly grave, dearie?" asked my husband, with the caress of an affectionate St. Bernard.

"Because we must end this model domestic scene of fireside felicity, and go to that brute of a dinner," I fibbed, bravely.

It took all the accessories of a new Paris frock to drive away the memory of Bob's face.

My husband came back, very stiff and crackly, while Celeste was fastening my carriage boots.

"That's right. You forgot them last time, careless child!" said he, paternally. "And take a boa, or lace thing, in case the drawing-room is chilly after that grilling dining-room of the Davises'."

"Oh, Dan, how crooked your shoulders look in that coat!" I cried, thoughtlessly—Bob was a West Pointer. "I don't think Benson's made a success of that coat, Dan."

"Now, I thought it particularly good," said Dan, somewhat touchily, as he glanced over the offending shoulder into the hall mirror. Neither of us spoke again until the coupé had rolled along for a block or two.

"Are you cross, Bear?" I said, peeping up at him as we passed an electric light. "Because, if you're in a savage humor, I won't suggest that a man's first duty is to button his wife's gloves."

"A thousand pardons, Fi!" said Dan, penitently. One should, when possible, make a man feel self-reproachful at such moments. He began tugging so willingly at my glove that all the buttons came off, at which he swore under his breath; and I burst into a delighted peal of laughter. I love to hear my good husband swear; it makes me feel so much less wicked myself.

"It's no end sweet of you to take it that way. I didn't mean to be so rough," said Dan; and I thought it unnecessary to mention how loose the buttons of new gloves always are, or that I intended to roll them back under the wrists at dinner, anyway.

Of course, I get on rather well with Dan; but he is a bore at dinner, or, rather, I fancy he must be. I never have to endure his elegance at such functions, of course; though some stupid or malicious hostesses will place husbands and wives on opposite sides of the table, which makes it awkward for the man who takes you in, and possibly for you—a little later. But, I'm told, Dan is a favorite. Being a well-known financier, the women, no doubt, think it an honor to be taken in by him, and the men are probably looking for tips.

If there is any plot in this rambling tale of mine, it thickens rapidly at this point.

When Dan and I sailed into the Davises' drawing-room, I in the tinkling splendor of my green-and-silver-wrought dinner-frock, the first person my eyes rested on, and, I need hardly add, the only one I thenceforth really heeded, was Reggie Ferrers. Reggie

Ferrers, the satirist, with his clever, near-sighted eyes and sensitive mouth and chin, a poor, talented author, of all men to be found at Uncle Eliphalet's dinner that night!

"No doubt I'm a substitute. We landed only this morning," said Reggie, wickedly, under his breath, after we had exchanged conversational greetings. "I never aspired so high before."

"Did I look surprised?" said I, wondering if my voice was as shaky as my knees. Reggie had gone abroad before my wedding. "I thought you still in England, you know. Translate it into, 'pleased to see you again,' and, 'I congratulate you on the success of your book'—to claim a woman's privilege—'I told you so,'" I ended, trying to appear very matronly and patronizing. How handsome Reggie looked! His eyes sparkled, wickedly; then the old expression of reckless deviltry settled around his mouth, warning me to save myself at once. But I was too gaily excited by seeing him again to heed the timorous appeal of my brow-beaten conscience,

"I'm to take you in," exclaimed Reggie, after consulting his card. "You, the wife of the railroad magnate! Good Lord, Fichen—I mean Mrs. Carleton—the world's a jest, and all things show it. You taught me that philosophy, Phyllis. You always had a charming sense of humor—that excellent thing in a woman."

"Don't be a cynical goose, Reggie," I chided him, with an assumption of greater ease than I felt. Clearly, this was not to be a dinner that bored one. I marshaled my nerves into line, and bade them be calm and obedient. I prayed for mastery over Reggie Ferrers. I knew there would be a desperate battle between us. Did Reggie blame me still? Did he still hate me? Would he be generous, should he win the victory over me, a weak, unhappy girl?

How I detested him for being so handsome and clever! How I longed, at the next moment, to sob out all my misery to him, and beg for a little of

our old gay happiness and sympathy together! Ah, there was madness in my brain as well as in his, and I, too, possessed that dare-devil recklessness that would play with edged tools at such a time.

When I took Reggie's arm to go in to dinner, my hand touched his, quite by chance. I felt his tremble, and, at that, the little imp within me rejoiced, evilly; all my discretion flew to the winds. Dan was ahead of us, safe with some unknown woman who wore English stays. I cast down the gauntlet with a blush and a sigh, and then I glanced up into Reggie's intense, excited face. The battle had begun.

At first, my companion was moody, then he suddenly flashed out into his old, brilliant, fascinating self. Reggie could hold a roomful of people transfixed with his talk, and he had the supreme talent of making a woman feel herself a perfect *de Staël*. We had always entertained each other exceedingly in the old days. And then he grew tender, and my heart began to feel big with a terrible ache; even while I rallied him on his sentimental mood.

"Have you forgotten that afternoon in the *Stormy Petrel*?" whispered Reggie, hoarsely.

"But there were so many," I returned, gaily, trying to gain time.

"The afternoon," said Reggie, bending over me and looking deep into my eyes.

"Really, you must be good, Reggie," I said, hastily, glancing up and across the table with some apprehension.

For the first time, I perceived a long mirror on the opposite wall, and, with some confusion, met my husband's eyes in the glass. As I called a smile into my face, Dan coolly and deliberately turned away from me to answer some question from his fair companion, she of the angles and Gothic construction.

"Who is the early English spinster with my husband?" said I, affecting deep interest, and determined

to lead the conversation into safer channels.

"Heiress from the 'Land o' Cakes,' I believe," said Reggie, indifferently. "Don't ask her figure. I'm sure you don't want to know it, if it's like the one only too visible—Peter Robinson's best, warranted real bone!"

"Don't be ill-natured," I said, hysterically.

"I'll wager they're discussing Art, with a capital," Reggie continued, unabashed.

"If you knew Mr. Carleton, you'd never accuse him of such frivolity," said I.

I have taken some trouble to lead up to and repeat this remark, because I can truthfully say that it was my nearest approach to disparagement of my husband. Reggie angled skilfully; but, I am thankful to remember, quite unsuccessfully, for some hint or confession of discontent on my part. I was furious with Dan for treating me like a naughty child, and I took no pains to conceal my flirtation with Reggie; indeed, when I felt Dan was looking my way, I redoubled its appearance of intensity; but, as a matter of fact, I was loyal to my husband in every tone and word.

After we women arrived safely in the drawing-room, my tense nerve somewhat relaxed, and I realized that my heart was throbbing with unrest and unhappiness. How was I to support existence, with Reggie Ferrers in the same town? And Dan was angry, too! I was more afraid than I cared to own, even to myself, of the quiet, dignified man I had never learned to know, much less to love. Oh, that I could sob out my miserable confession to Betty! What would Betty have said? Would she—could she—did she know? But Betty would not smile at me to-night. She would pity me, but she would reproach me; and yet she alone could understand me. She would not be too hard—if—if—

Another voice at my ear startled me. I turned, and beheld Reggie, the Gothic lady and my husband.

"Mrs. Carleton," said Reggie, with much manner, "as one of my oldest friends, I want to present to you—my wife," and the Gothic lady inclined her stately head. I shall, perhaps, some day, forgive Reggie Ferrers, but never should I have been able to forgive myself had not my woman's pride come so gallantly to the rescue.

As Reggie stood watching me narrowly, with half-closed eyes and twitching lips, I put out both hands and grasped the bony knuckles of the bride, with what a reporter would have termed, "graceful cordiality."

"I am delighted to meet Mrs. Ferrers!" I cried. "It's so nice for Reggie to have some one, at last, to keep him straight. I'm sure he is to be congratulated!"

"We landed only a few hours ago," explained Mrs. Reggie, in a cathedral manner. "Reginald was called suddenly to America by his publishers; and, at the last moment, we announced our engagement and were married quietly, at my home in Perth. I call it quite shockin', myself!"

"Romantic, not shocking," I said, sweetly. "But Reggie always had an eye to dramatic effects. He ought to write a play."

"Perhaps. If Mrs. Carleton would take a part in it, I might feel there would be a chance for success," said Reggie. "Mrs. Carleton is a capital actress, Gwendoline."

"Remember, I only take part in farces, nothing serious," I flashed back. "Mrs. Ferrers, you will let me have the honor of giving you a luncheon very soon?"

I had been acting for Reggie's benefit and had quite forgotten my husband, who now, to my great relief, joined casually in the talk. After a few minutes, his deep voice, seemingly addressed to no one in particular, fell like balm on my soul.

"Phyllis, I have made our excuses to our hostess for leaving early. The carriage has been waiting for some time, and you know how tyrannical Johnson is."

Ah, how glad I was to escape! But

only as I fastened my cloak in front of Mrs. Davis's mirror did I realize how pale and weary I looked. The thought crossed my mind that Dan had seen, and was taking me away before any one else should notice it. But knowing how obtuse men are in such matters, I dismissed that idea.

Dan silently helped me into the carriage, followed me, banged the door, and then retired into a corner, behind his big fur collar.

"Did you have a pleasant time?" I inquired, airily. Had I not broken the silence by speech, I should certainly have screamed.

"Not very," replied Dan, tersely, pulling his hat over his eyes. Then I shivered, and Dan said, politely, "You are cold, I'm afraid. Let me tuck the rug around your feet."

"N-n-o—I'm quite c-c-comfortable. D-d-d-don't bother," I chattered, with a sudden burst of tears. Dan's answer was to seize me as if I were a baby, and to tuck me up energetically in the fur carriage-robe, to the detriment of my chiffons; but he did not offer any sympathy or consolation. And I only shivered and cried harder, until the humor of Reggie's trick suddenly overpowered me, and I began to laugh hysterically.

"D-d-don't be so c-cross, Dan!" I gasped. "Be good to me, please!"

Then Dan put one arm about me, and held me close, while I laughed and sobbed on his shoulder, glad of his protection, yet mightily afraid of him.

"Aren't you g-g-glad it's fur and the starch won't come out?" I giggled, damply, wishing I could fling myself out under the wheels and end the "jest," as Reggie Ferrers called this useless existence of mine.

"Poor little girl, you're all worn out!" said Dan, seriously, but kindly, to my intense relief. I gave way then to my unhappiness, but my husband did not attempt to soothe or reason with me.

When we reached our house, Dan would have tried to carry me in, but

I brushed quickly by him, and raced up to my room to lower the gas; for I knew what a fright I must look. I had but just accomplished this when Dan overtook me, and, looking rather relieved to find I was not attempting suicide, he established me in the easy-chair and, somewhat sharply, forbade me to leave it.

"I don't care to call Celeste just now, Phyllis," he said, gravely. "Please try to do without her, and let me help you out of this tight finery."

My elegant husband was kneeling, rather white and anxious, at my feet, to unbuckle my high-heeled satin slippers; his tie was under one ear; his hat, which he had entirely forgotten, balanced precariously on the back of his bent head. I wanted awfully to kick it off on my little silk-stockinged toe, it was so temptingly close; but, under the circumstances, I feared Dan might not think it a wifely act.

Reggie Ferrers's laugh rang in my ears. I hated him! I hated Dan! Most of all, I hated my vain, selfish, wretched self! I knew Dan was trying not to let me see his displeasure, but I felt that he was deeply offended with me for flirting so wildly with Ferrers.

A sense of my husband's goodness, and of his strong, loving protection, and of all that it meant, came over me. I felt he would never forgive me; in his straightforward honesty, how could he understand me? What should an untempted, untemptable fellow like Dan know of a coquette's frenzied and morbid thirst for excitement, or of her hunger for conquest? In spirit, if not in letter, he might judge me guilty, and refuse to consider my weakness and frivolity in the light of an excuse. He might insist on a practical separation, send me abroad, perhaps; leave me alone at this crisis, a prey to my own remorse and unhappiness—what would then become of me?

I gave a little groan; and then there came to me an impulse—I felt Betty

might approve, if she knew. My heart grew less heavy at the idea, even while I feared. I sat up and put my hand on Dan's shoulder.

"Thank you very much, you kind old boy. I'll try to be sensible and calm now; in fact, my stately and imposing self!" I said. Then, not daring to reflect, I suddenly threw both arms round my husband's neck and sobbed out the whole miserable story.

"Save me, Dan!" I ended, piteously. "Save me from Reggie, and from myself—and don't be very hard!"

Dan did not answer for a moment; then, to my infinite comfort, he just held me closer, and whispered, "I knew it all before you told me, Phyllis. Thank God, you trusted your dull old husband!"

"You—knew—it—all?" I gasped.

Dan nodded. "You have never thought much of my perception, Fi; but love is a great teacher, and I understand you better than you dream. I know you have never cared for me."

"Oh, Dan, I'm not worthy of you!" I stammered. "But I tried to love you! I thought you knew I did."

"Even a stupid old duffer like me knows when the woman he cares for doesn't care for him!" said my husband, simply. Whereat I only cried the harder.

"Don't cry so, little one. It is my fault, Phyl. You weren't meant for a life of poverty and care, and I thought only of saving you from it, when I persuaded you to marry me. I loved you so, dear, that I never dreamed you might not learn to care for me. But we've been good friends always, Fi, and I honor you for all you've done to make things jolly, dear."

As he spoke, a great wave of joy swept all the bitterness from my heart. I lifted my eyes slowly to Dan's, and, as I looked, a sudden happy light dawned and grew in his.

"And doesn't a duffer know when she finds she *does* care?" I whispered.

WHEN YOU COME BACK

WHEN you come back to me, you will not know
 What weary winds of wonder, storms of fear,
 Have swept my lonely soul since you were here,
 Or how, the moment that you rise to go,
 Doubt glowers in the east, the gray clouds grow
 To cover all my blue; the landscape sere
 Huddles unsheltered, and the sudden drear,
 Dull glare of tempest in the west flames low.

You will not know! There is no way to tell
 Of that next day washed clear by gusts of rain,
 My flowers lifting shy, sweet heads again,
 My robin singing, softly, "All is well!"
 No, when you come again, here is my smile,
 My hand—as if I trusted all the while.

NORA BARNHART.



A SERIOUS OBJECTION

SHE—What do you think of smokeless powder?
 HE—It is difficult to remove from a vest.



MORE TO FOLLOW

SYLVESTER—She is a woman with a past, I understand.
 RANDOLPH—Yes, and more coming.



PETITION

OH, hold me closer to your heart,
 Lest Fate should come between!
 Or Time, his cruel arrows dart;
 Oh, hold me closer to your heart!
 Some breeze might blow Love's wings apart
 Where now they do o'erlean.
 Oh, hold me closer to your heart
 Lest Fate should come between!

CONSTANCE FARMAR.

THE MODERN AUTOCRAT

A COMEDY OF CROSS-PURPOSES

By Louise Collins

SCENE—*The Courtenays' breakfast-room. MR. COURTENAY is deeply interested in the morning paper. MRS. COURTENAY is engaged in opening her letters.*

MRS. COURTENAY—Gordon, do you think that I can have a new gown for Mrs. Ralston's dinner-dance?

MR. COURTENAY (*abstractedly*)—Yes, yes; of course. (*Proudly*) I knew that speech of mine would tell. That fixes me all right with the party.

Silence for a few moments. A smile spreads over MR. COURTENAY's face as he continues reading. MRS. COURTENAY opens another letter.

MRS. COURTENAY—Laura wishes me to go south with her, Gordon. She leaves at the end of next week. What do you think of the suggestion?

MR. COURTENAY (*without looking up*)—Capital! capital! That is what I call a really brilliant idea.

MRS. COURTENAY (*delightedly*)—What a dear you are! I was almost afraid to ask; you made so many objections the last time I spoke to you.

Another period of silence, during which MR. COURTENAY turns a page, and MRS. COURTENAY opens a third letter.

MRS. COURTENAY—Madeleine has discovered a treasure of a milliner. She is really a lady, but circumstances have forced her into business. It would be charitable to order a hat or two from her. What do you think, Gordon?

MR. COURTENAY (*hearing only her question*)—Think? Why, I think that it is just the thing. Admirable. Didn't I tell you, my dear, that I was on the high road to success?

Silence for fully five minutes. MR. COURTENAY finishes reading his speech and turns to the editorial page. His pleased expression gives way to a frown.

MRS. COURTENAY—I forgot to tell you that Katherine Webster was here yesterday. Her affairs are in a dreadful muddle since poor Lester's death. She wishes you to call some afternoon and give her a little advice.

MR. COURTENAY (*savagely*)—Confound it!

MRS. COURTENAY (*amazed*)—Why Gordon, you are positively inhuman! She is the widow of your oldest friend.

MR. COURTENAY—The brute!

MRS. COURTENAY—How can you speak that way of Lester, when he was your—?

MR. COURTENAY (*still buried in his paper*)—I repeat, he's a brute! Any man who will distort my meaning in such a way as to jeopardize my prospects with my party is a—

MRS. COURTENAY—You are losing your senses, Gordon! Why, Lester never—

MR. COURTENAY—Who said "Lester"? I am talking of the editor of this paper. He is a scoundrel, and I mean to call on him and tell him so.

MRS. COURTENAY—What a horrid man he must be! But, Gordon, if I order that gown this morning, it may——

MR. COURTENAY—Gown? What gown?

MRS. COURTENAY (*surprised*)—Why, you just told me that I could have a new gown for the Ralstons' dinner, and that I might go south with——

MR. COURTENAY—Never said anything of the kind! You must be dreaming, for I have been reading this vile paper for the last twenty minutes. Gown, indeed! I guess not! Go away? Not if I know it!

MRS. COURTENAY (*in a torrent of tears*)—You are positively the most selfish man I ever knew, and I (*sob*)—I am glad (*sob*)—that editor treated your sp-sp-speech as he did!



THE INQUISITION

THAT medieval days are gone,
The question we may moot;
Men still go broke upon the wheel,
And suitors get the boot.

And even football plainly shows
There's nothing that we lack;
The teams are on the gridiron now,
Their friends are on the rack.

McLANDBURGH WILSON



NO APPEAL

MEEKER—My wife and I always settle our differences by arbitration.

BRADLEY—Who is the arbitrator?

"My wife, of course."



FOND OF DISCUSSION

TOMPKINS—Now, we'll admit, just for the sake of argument, that——
HIS WIFE—Oh, you'd do anything for the sake of an argument.



ONLY religious compositions should be played on an upright piano.

SHEEP'S CLOTHING

By Harold Melbourne

ONCE there was a bad man who was good-looking. Bad men are not always good-looking; but good-looking men are often bad. Perhaps they are bad because they are good-looking. At any rate, that is why our bad man was bad. He was always falling in with women and falling out with men. Men and women would not let him be good. They would only let him be good-looking. He was big and strong, and his legs were straight and his shoulders were broad. His face was the face of a Greek god. His complexion was a rich, clear olive; his eyes brown and bright; his hair short and black; his mouth full-lipped, yet firm.

There was a good-looking girl who lived opposite the good-looking man. The girl was small and dainty and flower-like. Her face was pink-and-white and lovely; her eyes big and blue; her hair light and soft and wavy; her mouth small and red. And the good-looking girl was good. The good-looking man soon found that out. He smirked at the good-looking girl. But she only smiled back, sadly.

And the man became intensely interested in the good-looking girl, and, finally, he spoke to her.

"Let me talk to you," he whispered; "I know everything."

"Then I cannot let you talk to me," answered the girl, quietly, "for I know nothing." She paused, and then went on: "But I suspect a lot. I suspect that men are either wolves or sheep; and I suspect that they are mostly wolves; I like sheep."

And the girl walked away. But the man stood still. He was dumfounded. The girl had not fallen in love with him! Instead, he had fallen in love with her!

"And she doesn't like wolves!" he mused; "and she does like sheep!" Then he went and donned sheep's clothing.

The good-looking man ceased to smirk at the good-looking girl. But he smiled at her, sadly, even as she had smiled at him. And he loved her with all his heart and soul. Finally, he spoke to her again.

"I respect and revere you," he whispered.

"And I respect you," said the girl.

After that, the good-looking man and the good-looking girl were often together. The man was always courteous and devoted, and the girl was always gentle and kind. They loved each other, dearly.

One day a good-looking woman, who was bad, came to see the good-looking girl, who was good. And the good-looking woman, who was bad, said to the good-looking girl, who was good, "The good-looking man who comes to see you is not good; he is bad. I, too, am bad. But I will not let him be bad with you."

"Oh!" moaned the good girl, "is he then a wolf?"

"Yes," snickered the bad woman, "he is a wolf!"

"A wolf in sheep's clothing!" sobbed the good girl.

"Yes, a wolf in sheep's clothing!" sneered the bad woman.

Before the bad woman left, the good-looking man came. The good-looking man gasped. The bad woman laughed. But the good girl cried.

"So you wear sheep's clothing, eh?" jeered the bad woman.

"Do you?" wailed the good girl. "Is it true?"

"Yes; it is true," answered the good-looking man; "and I always shall wear it!"

"No, you shall not!" snarled the bad woman. "You shall not wear sheep's clothing. You are a wolf!" And she sprang at him and tore off his sheep's clothing.

But lo! no wolf was revealed—only a sheep!



SHEPHERDESS FAIR

O SHEPHERDESS fair, the flocks you keep
Are dreams and desires and tears and sleep.

O shepherdess brown, O shepherdess fair,
Where are my flocks you have in care?

My wonderful, white, wide-pasturing sheep
Of dream and desire and tears and sleep?

Many the flocks, but small the care
You give to their keeping, O shepherdess fair!

O shepherdess gay, your flocks have fed
By the iris pool, by the saffron bed,

Till now, by noon, they have wandered far,
And you have forgotten where they are!

O shepherdess fair, O shepherdess wild,
Full wise are your flocks, but you a child!

You shall not be chid if you let them stray.
In your own wild way, in your own child way,
You will call them all back at the close of day.

CHARLES G. D. ROBERTS.



SO MUCH MORE INTERESTING

SMALL DAUGHTER (*tired of playing alone*)—Mummy, when I get to heaven shall I always play wif angels?

MOTHER—Yes, my darling.

"Mummy, don't you fink that if I've been *vevy, vevy* dood all the mornin' playin' wif' angels, in the afternoon *p'waps* God will give me a lickie devil to play wif?"